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SERMONS OF POWER

Pentecost Series

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SERMONS OF POWER

PENTECOST SERIES

SERMONS BY

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FOREWORD

FOREWORD

THESE "Sermons of Power" are not of transient interest as an observance that has to do with the year 1930 A.D. They are of permanent applications for all the days and all the years.

They bring to the Church and to all the Churches a sane and spiritual interpretation of Pentecost, what it meant for the early Church and what it should mean to the Church of to-day and the Church of to-morrow. There is in this volume the silent rebuke of all cant and week sentimentalism which for some minds have obscured the meaning of Pentecost.

This great word with its wealth of significance has been perverted in the interest of a religious reactionism. The Pentecostal power calls for spiritual pioneers. The Pentecostal gift has also been construed in terms of a narrow religious individualism and a private spiritual luxury.

As widely different as the world situation in the twentieth century is from the world of the first century, yet the heart of the meaning of Pentecost has for us an abiding significance and an indispensable value.

As the Christians of to-day wholly respond to the Lordship of the risen Lord, and open up all the channels of their personality to his Spirit, pentecostal power again empowers the Church. How futile within themselves are all our machinery, organizations, institutions, prepared programs, desperate drives, elaborate orders, ritualism, external equipment, and doctrinal systems.

The Pentecostal experience means that Christ is living and working within us and through us. This experience "transforms the fact of Christ into force." It is love in which all false barriers and distinctions are broken down. It is faith with a new insight into the purpose and mission of the Church.

It is hope, boundless optimism, the death of all discouragement. It is truth, not as cold intellectuality, but as a mighty passion. It is courage that obeys God rather than men. It is abounding joy amid the adverse conditions of life. It is compassion for the children of God that are scattered abroad.

It is unselfishness that pays the price of worldly ambitions and worldly possessions. It is zeal which shares the holy energy of the Divine Spirit.

It is power which transforms weakness into strength.

It is our high and unanswerable apologetic as we face a theoretical and practical materialism.

"Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,
With all thy quickening powers;
Come, shed abroad a Saviour's love,
And that shall kindle ours."

WILLIAM P. KING,
Book Editor.

THE MEANING OF PENTECOST

THE MEANING OF PENTECOST

BY EDWIN DUBOSE MOUZON,
BISHOP, METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH

"And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him." (Acts 2: 38, 39.)

We do well to turn again to the Acts of the Apostles and make a fresh study of the beginnings of the Christian Church. Pentecost did not just happen. The reign of law is as certain in the spiritual world as in the natural order. Not only did mighty consequences follow Pentecost, but also great events had led up to that creative power. But that day did not come as the result of a set program. When it did come it was full of surprises. The Risen Christ had indeed exhorted his disciples to "wait for the promise of the Father," and had said, "Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you." As yet, however, they did not know what form the promise of the Father would take, nor how the power of the Spirit would be manifested when it did

come upon them. And when he came they were taken by surprise, and the outcome was not what they had previously looked for. It may turn out with us to be the same way. If there should, in the gracious providence of God, be given to the Church and the world a new Pentecost, the very thing that some of us do not look for and do not want might happen. Our set programs might be smashed. Our prejudices might be set at naught. Our traditionalism might be rudely upset. Some of our very orthodoxies might be destroyed. So it was with those disciples waiting for the promise of the Father. So it might turn out to be with us. Are we ready for it? Are we prepared for what God may choose to send? Are we ready for a new Pentecost, whatever the price may be?

Let us ask then: What was the significance of Pentecost? What was the real meaning of that mighty happening in Jerusalem nineteen hundred years ago? I think that for the true answer we would best go to the narrative in the Acts and to Peter's speech following the outpouring of the Spirit. And then for further study we would do well to read again the Gospel according to John. For here in the Fourth Gospel we have the interpretation of

the inspired writer toward the close of the first century of the full significance of the coming of the Spirit upon the disciples at Pentecost.

Certain things are perfectly plain. We set them down for careful study.

I

We have here on Pentecost an experience based upon and springing definitely out of the historic revelation of God in Christ, and not to be separated from him.

Nothing can be more certain than this. Peter makes that perfectly plain. Hear his words: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay: whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it."

Back of the experience on Pentecost was the Life and Ministry and Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Without all this, that ex-

perience would never have occurred. And no fresh experience of the Spirit will come unless we keep in close touch with the revelation of God in Christ. For it needs constantly to be kept in mind that in Jesus we do have the supreme emergence of God in human history. In Christ God confronts men. In Christ God looks men in the face. Paul uses a most surprising and illuminating form of speech. He speaks of "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." What could be more suggestive than that reference to "the face of Jesus Christ"? The glory of God is seen in "the face" that smiled on little children—"the face" that was swept with compassion for the sinful and lost—"the face" that was wet with tears at the grave of Lazarus—"the face" that was tortured with agony in the garden and on the cross. "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ:" This lay back of the experience of Pentecost and made that experience possible.

And if there is to be anything like a new Pentecost it must come out of a fuller recovery of the historic Christ. There must be a completer understanding and a keener appreciation of what Christ was and is if there is to be a

deeper experience of the power that was poured out in the upper chamber on the waiting disciples. And just here is hope and a sure ground of expectancy. For undoubtedly there is coming to be a juster appreciation of the Christ of history. Beyond question there is coming a better understanding of the meaning of his life and the significance of his teaching. Christ is taking the central place in the thought of the Church. The world itself, disappointed in its hopes and defeated in its efforts, is beginning to realize that Christ alone is the Light of the world. One may venture, then, with confidence to say that a fresh outpouring of the Spirit of God in our day will manifest itself in Christ-like living. The Spirit of Christ will be the test of discipleship. The example of Christ will govern in all the relations of life. The teachings of Christ will be seen to apply to all aspects of human living. In his light shall we see light shining everywhere.

II

When the day of Pentecost had fully come there came to the assembled disciples an experience of abiding certainty touching the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

During the wonderful forty days between his

resurrection and his ascension Christ had come and gone. He had been seen at the empty sepulcher, he had appeared to the two disciples as they walked toward Emmaus; he had manifested himself to the disciples as they were met behind closed doors; he had disclosed himself in such a manner as to silence the doubts of the fearful Thomas; he had been seen by the disciples in the early morning by the seashore. In many other ways he had manifested himself as alive from the dead. But he came and went. Then came the days of waiting in the upper room. The followers of Jesus were waiting. They were not quite sure what it was they were waiting for.

The fact of his resurrection had been established. Without that fact there would have been no Christian Pentecost. Lying back behind what happened at Pentecost was that mighty historic phenomenon, the rising from the dead of the crucified Jesus. Of that event they were all quite sure. Peter's words give utterance to the faith of the twelve: "Him God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." And later on he says that David's words found their supreme fulfillment in Christ:

"I beheld the Lord always before my face;
For he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:
Therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;
Moreover my flesh also shall dwell in hope:
Because thou wilt not leave my soul unto Hades,
Neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption."

"This Jesus," Peter goes on to say, "did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses."

That was the great objective fact of which the disciples were certain before the day of Pentecost came. And now there came an added experience. That Jesus who had lived and died and risen from the dead was found to be alive forevermore. The apostolic spokesman continues: "Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear." Following the experience of Pentecost, the disciples no longer waited for the promise of the Father; in that experience they were sure that the promise had its fulfillment. In the coming of the Holy Spirit they were conscious of the presence of Christ. He had come now never to go away again. The living Christ was theirs forever.

As has been suggested the full significance of all this is best seen in the Gospel according

to John where the Beloved Disciple writes out of the experience of years of faith and fellowship. Said Jesus: "I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you. . . . I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you. . . . He shall not speak from himself. . . . He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you. . . . Do ye inquire among yourselves concerning this, that I said, A little while, and ye behold me not, and again a little while, and ye shall see me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. . . . Ye therefore now have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one taketh away from you." These promises were all fulfilled in the experience of Pentecost. Then and there Christ came again, and from his disciples he never departed. Through the Holy Spirit his presence became universal and abiding. It was in this certainty that they went forth to preach and to suffer and to die. After this experience the Jews marveled at their "bold-

ness." The men who had been frightened like a flock of sheep bereft of their shepherd, the men who had met timidly behind closed doors for fear of the Jews—these men now feared no man, for they had not been left desolate. The living Christ was with them all the days in the fulfillment of his promise.

As we have been saying, we do not know what form a new Pentecost would take. It would probably surprise us as greatly as the early followers of Christ were surprised by the first Pentecost. But of one thing we may be certain, a new Pentecost would bring us a fresh baptism of Christian certainty. It would do this, because we need it so! The doubter is always uncertain. The uncertain man is never sure in his aim and never effective in his deed.

There is a graphic picture in the resurrection story as told by Luke. It is the story of the doubt and uncertainty of two disciples as they walked on a memorable day toward the village named Emmaus. Christ had been crucified and buried. But now a strange whisper trembled on the air and stirred their hearts. It was told that he had risen from the dead. But they were in doubt. And they walked slowly and talked sadly as they went

on their way. Then came a third person, a stranger it seemed. And he asked, "What communications are these that ye have one with another, as ye walk?" And one of them said, "Are you a lone stranger in Jerusalem, not to know what has been happening there?" And then they went on to tell how Jesus of Nazareth had been a prophet mighty in word and deed before God and all the people, and how the chief priests and rulers had delivered him up to be condemned to death, and had crucified him, and how they had hoped that it was he who should prove to be the Christ. And they added that, besides all this, the strange tidings had reached their ears that he had risen from the dead. It is a picture drawn true to life. But what I wanted specially to notice is the fact that when the stranger addressed the two disciples and asked what it was they were talking about, the correct translation has it, "They stood still, looking sad." What a story does that tell—"*They stood still, looking sad*"! And is not this graphically descriptive of many professed Christians nowadays—"They stand still, looking sad"? Where there is no certainty there is sadness. Where there is the sadness of uncertainty there is no progress. What is needed is

the full assurance of faith. What is needed is the Pentecostal experience that makes the living Christ to be forever near. The experience of his abiding presence is the secret of the power of Pentecost.

III

The experience of the day of Pentecost was experience that created a new fellowship. In the full sense of the terms the Christian fellowship came into being with the Pentecostal experience.

I am not now questioning the fact that the New Testament Church fulfills and perfects the Church of the Old Testament. And there can be no doubt that in a very true sense Jesus had organized the Church when he gathered together disciples and sent them forth to preach and to baptize. I recognize the importance of keeping these facts in mind. But it nevertheless remains true that in the deeper significance of the words the Christian fellowship came into being on the day of Pentecost.

It is just at this point in history that a new word appears in the New Testament, that great word *koinonia*, fellowship, communion. It is a fellowship that has its origin in the Holy Spirit. It is the same word that we find in the

apostolic benediction—"the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all"—the communion that has its origin in the Holy Spirit and is seen in the fellowship of the saints. We read here in the account of Pentecost given in Acts, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching, and in the fellowship, in the breaking of the bread and in the prayers."[1] It is of this fellowship in the life eternal that St. John writes in his First Epistle: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." And it is concerning this same fellowship that the great creed which comes down from the earliest days of the Church speaks so explicitly: "I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins." The Holy Spirit creates the holy catholic Church which is the communion of saints and has the right and power to bring about the forgiveness of sins and all that goes along with that.

Following the coming of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost the disciples were fused into

[1]I am following accurately the Greek Testament.

one body. It is written of them: "The believers all kept together; they shared all they had with one another; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds among all, as any one might be in need."[2] As Professor Scott says in his illuminating study in the volume entitled "The Spirit," "The conduct described was the spontaneous expression of the spirit of fellowship, in those first moments when it welled up in each individual member at the touch of Christ. The attitude of the individual toward the things he had called his own was a measure of the completeness with which he had been merged in the Koinonia."[3]

Let it be said then with all possible emphasis that the coming of the Spirit creates a fellowship. A fresh experience of the power of Pentecost to-day might be expected to do the same thing, to bring into closer unity all the people of God and to bring to birth a deep feeling of obligation to all who stand in any need.

Are we prepared to pray for Pentecost? Are we ready for what might happen if again the heavens should open and the Spirit of

[2]Moffatt [3]Page 134.

God be poured out upon his Church? Look back and see what did actually take place and then judge if we are ready for His coming.

1. There was created a fellowship that broke down all racial barriers. "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians"—all these came under the power of Pentecost, and all were swept into the Christian communion. Without question a new Pentecost would do the same thing. It would sweep away racial barriers and recognize all Christians as brothers in Christ Jesus. Are we ready for such a Pentecost? Are we willing to get ready?

2. Pentecost overleaped all sectional bounds. That was one of the most remarkable things about Pentecost. These Jews had been the narrowest and most exclusive of people. Possibly never before or since were racial and national prejudices so deep and bitter. It was, indeed, some time before the apostles came to see the full significance of it. It was necessary that for a time they move almost

exclusively among the Jews and proselytes. But the implications of Pentecost began presently to work themselves out. Their prejudices gave way to the widening influences of the indwelling Spirit. And soon we find them going even among foreign people and into the distant parts of the earth. The Christian communion was to embrace all Christians everywhere and to take in all men in whom had been born the Spirit of Jesus. And are we ready for such a Pentecost? Do we realize that the Church of Jesus Christ cannot fly any racial, or national, or sectional flag?

3. Pentecost brought into being a fellowship capable of embracing all sorts and conditions of men and of using men with all varieties of gifts. The Holy Spirit did not reduce men to a monotonous sameness. His coming intensified their peculiar gifts. His outpouring heightened each man's individual personality. And yet they were fused all into one. Concerning this St. Paul writes at length: "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord. And there are diversities of workings, but the same God,

who worketh all things in all. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal." And then there follows his interesting figure of the Church as the "body of Christ," with each member performing his own proper work with no ground of criticism of another, all together in perfect unity discharging the functions of the one body of Christ.

This kind of unity is the work only of the Spirit. It is not of man's making. Man may mar it. Man may unmake it and often has done so. The unity of life is not first of all a unity of organization. Rather the unity of the organism arises from unity of life. External unity may represent nothing but pressure from without. But it is forever true that where there is inward unity there will be outward unity also. The inner unity of the spirit will forever manifest itself in the bonds of peace.

It was for this that Jesus prayed, "that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me." In praying, therefore, for a new Pentecost let us look for the rebirth of a united fellowship which shall so reveal the

Spirit of the living Christ that minds in doubt and souls in confusion shall find rest and certainty that the world may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ sent of God for the salvation of men.

THE BIRTHDAY OF THE CHURCH

THE BIRTHDAY OF THE CHURCH

BY WILLIAM E. BARTON, D.D., LL.D.

FORMER MODERATOR OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES IN THE UNITED STATES

"We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." (Acts 2: 11.)

It is not likely that the death of Jesus produced a profound impression upon Jerusalem. If a business man from another city had inquired of some prominent resident of Jerusalem, he probably would have been told that matters were going very well in that town; crops were good, the wool market and the barley harvest were favorable, things were going very well—to be sure, there had been a little trouble at the time of the Passover, but that was not unusual; a young peasant from Galilee started an agitation, and had to be taken in hand by the police; it was unfortunate, but such things might be expected now and then. Jerusalem was doing very well. If his attention had been called to the prophecy of Joel, "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood," he would have said

that nothing of the sort had happened; there was nothing the matter with the sun or moon. Those symbols of mental darkening presumably made no impression as applicable to anything that had recently occurred in Jerusalem. So little do nations and cities and men and women understand the significance of the events that spell out their destiny and doom. Jerusalem trembled under no foreboding of approaching wrath; the market prices of wool and barley were not affected. But there was in Jerusalem a little band of men and women whose largest recorded number was a hundred and twenty, a company that had been stricken with a devastating grief, and that woke to sudden and wondering joy at the impulse of a mighty conviction. As yet they had no program, no definite plan; but they possessed a common love for the Master who had once been with them, and a strange new conviction that he was still living and regnant. They were tarrying in Jerusalem, according to his direction, until they should be endued with power from on high. How that power was to come to them, and what was to be its nature or effect, they cannot well have had any very definite idea. But they obeyed the command of Jesus, and tarried.

In due time the event for which they had been waiting, but whose nature and effect they could not have defined, occurred, and the Church was born. Jesus had spoken of the Church, once as a local society (Matt. 18: 17) and once as a world-wide and invincible institution (Matt. 16: 18), and he addressed his disciples as possessed of a corporate unity; but the Greek word for "church" was in common use, both secular and ecclesiastical. It was not a new word, nor did it as Jesus employed it connote to the disciples anything such as we now know as the Church. The word was held in memory as something that Jesus regarded as important, and in a sense already present; but there was no outward and visible organization, with rites and ceremonies, rules and records of membership, places and forms of worship, such as we now associate with the thought of the Church. All that we now associate with the thought of visible establishment remained, and we may very well understand why it was needful that it should remain, an organization to be effected when the promise of Jesus was fulfilled. That promise Jesus redeemed, and the Church was born. For nineteen centuries it has been a recognized force in human society. That patent fact

challenges attention and justifies more than passing thought.

The antecedent condition which made the birth of the Church possible was the unity of life and purpose on the part of the disciples. They were of one accord in one place. Conditions such as they had endured might easily have scattered them; but they had been driven together. No one had very much wisdom to give to the others, but the little they had grew as they shared it. They had not always been of one accord. They could have found occasion enough for discord if they had been seeking it. Peter could have reproved the sons of Zebedee for their ambition, and they in turn could have reproved Peter for his boastfulness and his profanity. They could all have rebuked each other for failings past all denial. They put these aside, and measurably they may be believed to have forgotten them. In the face of their common guilt no man had much of which he might accuse his brother. They were all with one accord in one place. No radio service can ever take fully the place of the visible assembly of God's people. It is not difficult to imagine what Pentecost would have lacked of achievement if the disciples had not been visibly present together when

the celestial impulse came. Theirs already was the unity of the Spirit. And that unity made the gift of the Spirit possible.

The ancient creeds had much, relatively, to say about the Person of Christ, but very little about God the Father, and they made but mere mention of the Holy Spirit. "Also the Holy Ghost, the Comforter," said the Te Deum. "I believe in the Holy Ghost," said the so-called Apostles' Creed. They said no more, for they had no more to say. They did not know what to say they believed about the Holy Ghost, and that being the case it was better that they said no more. One chief value of the oldest creeds is that there are so many matters touching modern problems on which they are silent; if the men who made the creeds had attempted to formulate our views, they would have made matters even worse than they are for us. They simply believe in the Holy Ghost. Except for having inspired the Bible, and being something that may be expected to be "poured out" at infrequent intervals, most people now do not know what to believe about the Holy Ghost. They believe in the Holy Ghost, but leave him very little to do. But the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost was a very definite impulse,

personal and efficient, that stirred the hearts of the first Christians to their very depths and began a movement whose end shall never be.

We can understand, or ought to understand, what Jesus meant when he said that it was expedient for the disciples that he should go away, because, otherwise, the Comforter, the Paraclete, could not come. That was not because Jesus and the Holy Spirit were mutually exclusive each of the other; Jesus was what he was because he was filled with the Holy Spirit. That Spirit descended upon him at baptism, and God gave not the Spirit to him by measure. There are not two Spirits of God, one of which was imparted to Jesus and the other a kindred Spirit of inferior grade bestowed upon the followers of Jesus. "There are diversities of gifts, but one Spirit." No distinction is to be drawn between God the Spirit and the Spirit of God. Nor need we mystify ourselves about the Personality of the Spirit; the Spirit possesses the personality of every man on earth who has received the Spirit. When the Spirit maketh intercession for us, the Spirit intercedes through us. But so long as Jesus was visibly present, the operation of the Spirit was limited by human

inability to believe in a Holy Spirit capable of manifestation through other lives than that of Jesus. Presumably not one of the disciples believed Jesus when he said, "It is expedient for you that I go away;" perhaps not many Christians believe him now. But Jesus was right about it. Until then the Spirit, ever living and ever present, was not yet manifest, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

We have no more compelling obligation in the celebration of the anniversary of Pentecost than the liberation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit from the manacles of theologizing inhibition on the one hand, and from the domain of superstition and spiritual arrogance on the other. When the Spirit came to be recognized, the cloven tongues of flame sat upon each member of the entire assembly. It was not reserved for the apostolic group, nor for the men; a hundred and twenty people, men and women, all lay-people though some who had been chosen by Jesus as apostles were regarded with special respect, all felt the life-giving, unifying impulse. The tongues of fire sat upon each of them.

They were, all in all, a commonplace company. Not many high, not many mighty, were there. They had not read many books or

written any books at all. There was not in the company a diploma or a title or a certificate of erudition obtained at an accredited school. But that little band was a handful of corn upon the top of a mountain whose fruit was to shake like Lebanon. It has been common enough to denounce them for their ignorance, for their mistaken ideas as to what the kingdom of God really was, to reprove them for their ambitions, and to blame them for not following Jesus more faithfully. Let us give over that cheap and unworthy sort of criticism. There are few finer things in human history than the way those first disciples had followed Jesus, even before his death, and there is no worthier record of fidelity in history than the way they followed the guidance of his Spirit afterwards. It is easy enough for us to rebuke them for faults such as we ourselves possess; they would have been first to admit the charge, and we should be the first to admit the unworthiness of our accusation. If they had not been faithful, we should have had no opportunity to rebuke them. Our faith definitely is conditioned upon their fidelity. It was their heroic faith that made our faith possible. They suffered the loss of all things that they might make it possible for us to cast back at

them a reminder that they were not free from human weakness. We have remembered their weaknesses more than was meet; let us rather remember and honor their heroism and their unconquerable and triumphant faith. They made possible the perpetuity of the gospel.

It is common and it is legitimate to contrast Babel and Pentecost. In the one, human ambition and selfishness wrought confusion of speech, and men were scattered in mutual misunderstanding. The world became worse than inarticulate, because each man spoke and no man understood. Pentecost, so we have often been reminded, reversed all that. Mutual understanding and sympathy and accord wrought out a perfect and reciprocal understanding, and the gospel, proclaimed by men who knew nothing of comparative philology, was understood by all. There is that in the gospel which lends itself thus to universal comprehension. If "one touch of nature makes the whole world kin," so one impulse of the Spirit of Divine compassion and sympathy makes all men understand each other. Paul said of this phenomenon that we men understand men because we are men ourselves, and then he added, "We have the mind of Christ." It was a very remarkable statement,

but nothing that has happened in nineteen hundred years would induce Paul to modify that statement. Pentecost did not precisely reverse Babel. It did not render lexicons superfluous; men still needed all the knowledge they had of languages other than their own. Insofar as there was unification of speech, it was the conquest of Alexander that wrought it, and nothing supernatural. When the record of Jesus's life was written, it was not the Galilean dialect in which Peter spoke at Pentecost which it employed, but the pagan language of Greece. The Holy Spirit was capable of inspiring a gospel, or four Gospels, to be recorded in that language, and the Greek was capable of creating a Pentecostal result where the Aramaic would have been futile. The Bible translated now into hundreds of languages is the literary equivalent of Pentecost, multiplied and expanded to intercontinental proportions. Pentecost did not end where it began. Men hear, and must hear, not simply in their own language as defined in their respective dictionaries, but in forms of thought and figures of speech and parabolic interpretations akin to the speech which they habitually employ. It is one evidence of the divinity of the gospel that it is capable of this

adaptation to human need. It can and it must go much farther than it has yet gone. Shall we still believe in the Holy Ghost? Or shall we confine the Spirit of God to the channels of operation of earlier days? It would be expedient for us that most of our doctrines of the Holy Ghost should go away, that the true doctrine of a living and unconfined Spirit of God may possess the Church and influence the world.

Jesus said truly, "Because I live, ye shall live also." He might also have said, "Because ye live, I shall live my life in you." He said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches; the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine." He might also have said, "The vine cannot bear fruit of itself unless it pour its life into fruitful branches." He said, "Apart from me ye can do nothing." He might also have said of the life of the Church, "Apart from you, I can do nothing." We have vast need to dignify Christian life and experience in our faith that not only do we depend upon God, but that God depends upon us. The Holy Spirit is the life of the Church, the social life of God; we are the Body of Christ, and his Spirit is the life of the Church, the utterance of the Church, the gospel written

in human hearts and expressed in a living organization.

The Church has displayed faults and limitations enough to satisfy the most flippant of her critics and the most superficial of her defenders. But how glorious her history! Her pathway through the ages has been lighted by the heroism of martyrs. Her architecture has placed the gilded Cross of Christ high above the loftiest of her buildings. Her hymns and anthems have been the marching song of progress and the comfort of despair. If civilization is to be saved, and there is reasonable hope that it will be so, it will not be her machinery that saves it. Again, as when the Roman Empire fell and carried civilization down into ruin, it will be the Church that saves and uplifts despairing humanity and saves learning and the arts.

If some curious person had dropped in at Peter's Jerusalem lodging on the night after Pentecost, and asked him, "Which do you think will last the longer, this Church of yours or the Roman empire?" what would Peter have replied? What would Pontius Pilate have replied? What would any supposedly sensible man have replied? A hundred or a thousand nations have risen and

fallen since then, but the Church survives. No flag that flies in the blue begins to be as old as that which bears the emblem of the Cross. And even now, in the midst of "a scornful wonder" that it has survived at all, it has, even to the view of the reader of human history, the promise of longer life than any political organization on earth.

"Sure as thy truth shall last
To Zion shall be given
The brightest glories earth can yield,
And brighter bliss of heaven."

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THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

BY THOMAS F. GAILOR

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"Jesus said unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father." (John 20: 17.)

THERE is always a profound encouragement and appeal in the fact of the reality, the humanness of our Lord's human life; that he did live and teach as a man on earth; that he was subject to temptation and to sorrow; that his soul did yearn for human sympathy and friendship. So our hearts are moved by the picture of his relation with his mother, her gentle nurture and loving solicitude for her Son. How often perhaps she held him at her knee in the long twilight and told him the story of the ancient glories of her people; how thrilled she was to see and hear him talking with the doctors in the Temple and giving commands at the marriage feast. As St. Luke says: "Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart." What was true of his relations with his mother was true also of his intercourse with others. Jesus was not only the tenderest and most sympathetic of

men; but he deeply valued and cherished the personal human love of his associates. The story of Mary and Martha and Lazarus is a beautiful poem of friendship; and the picture of Jesus weeping before the open tomb is a revelation of the reality of God's incarnate love, beyond all words to tell. So St. John, who tells the story, is the "disciple whom Jesus loved," upon whose breast he leaned at supper, and to whom he committed the care of his mother in his dying hour. It is significant that it was St. John, who, perhaps more intimately than any human being, knew and understood our Lord's thoughts and teaching, has given us the gospel of awe, of reverence, of intense and deep-rooted certainty as to the divinity, the very Godhead of Jesus Christ.

When we realize therefore the human life and friendships of Christ, we can appreciate more readily the history of this woman who is referred to in the text. If it be true, as many hold, that she is the same woman of whom our Lord said, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; because she loved much," then the incident becomes even more dramatic and significant. Eleven days before this she had worshiped him in Simon's house, overcome by the graciousness and generosity of his forgive-

ness; and now, with broken heart, after the tragedy of Good Friday, she has come to the sepulcher to pay the last tribute of woe at the grave of all her hopes; but the body was gone—robbed, taken from her. She turns and sees some one whom in her misery she takes to be the gardener, and says: "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." And Jesus said unto her: "Mary." Then she threw herself in a tumult of excitement at his feet; and he said: "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended." In other words, we may understand that he intended her to realize that these human friendships were done with, this earthly contact, this dim devotion to him as a great teacher, this untaught dependent clinging to him as the heroic leader of sorrowing disciples. All this was past. Henceforth he was to be known under new conditions; henceforth, in a new transfigured and immortal nature, Jesus Christ, as God and man, was to rule and judge his people.

The text contains therefore a warning and a promise. The warning is, that we shall no more come into contact with him by means of our earthly senses; and the promise is, that we shall know him in a higher and spiritual

way. He said: "I have not yet ascended." Take that in connection with those other words (John 7: 39), "The Holy Ghost was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified," and we understand his saying (John 16: 7), "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."

The history of Christian missions for two thousand years is the witness to the Presence and Power of that Holy Spirit of God, who spake by the Prophets, and who is the Lord and Life-Giver, the Spirit of Truth and Holiness. He is the Comforter, the Strengthener, the Paraclete, who speaks in conscience, who breathes in prayer, who illuminates Scripture, who bears in upon the soul in noble thoughts and high resolves that lead it up to God. He is the Author of all goodness, and the Lord of all life in earth and heaven.

It used to be the theme of many sermons, that there have been three dispensations: The dispensation of God the Father in the Old Testament; of God the Son in the New Testament; and of God the Holy Ghost to-day. And of course this is true only in the sense that our understanding of God's working has

emphasized the presence of each Person of the Trinity in these three periods. It certainly does not mean that the Christian doctrine of the Holy Trinity separates the Godhead. And yet this is a common error. For example, when our Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to suffer and die for men, it was God, the Father, who "so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son;" and yet some have taught the awful parody that Christ died to satisfy the vengeance of the Father.

In the same way, when we speak of the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, we do not mean to imply that the Holy Spirit was given to take the place of Christ. Our Lord's promise was, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world"; and again he said: "The Holy Ghost will take of mine and show it unto you." In other words, it is the Holy Spirit who effectuates the continuing Presence of our Lord. It is he, the Holy Spirit, who blesses the child in baptism, and it is he who in the Sacrament of the Altar enables the faithful to be indeed partakers of the glorified humanity of Jesus Christ.

Thus, as the Apostle said, "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace," and the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of order and law.

"In the beginning," we read, "God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep." And it was the Spirit that moved upon the face of the waters and brought order and beauty out of chaos. For he is the Spirit of love, as it is written; "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost." And love implies harmony and peace. Through him, in every stage of existence, effect follows cause, parts are proportioned to the whole, and every member of the vast fabric of the universe is articulated and jointed to every other member in a wondrous unity. So the Old Testament contains the record of how the Holy Ghost spake by the prophets and moved the hearts of men to believe in and pray to God. But there was an element of vagueness and indefiniteness in their thought of God, and it was the Holy Spirit who brought God close to us and clear to our understanding by the incarnation of Jesus Christ, as it is written: "The Holy Ghost came upon the Virgin and the Power of the Highest overshadowed her, and that Holy Thing that was born of her was called the Son of God." This is the secret of religion This is the key to all its problems.

By the power of the Holy Ghost a human life was the life of God; earthly elements become the instruments of eternal power; weak and mortal men are made the recipients and the agents of God's grace to men. Tear a limb from a tree. How dead and helpless a thing it is! but on the tree it drinks in the sap and substance of the trunk and puts forth leaves and flower and fruit to prove its life and nature. That is the mystery of life.

Then take the poor finite words that Moses and Isaiah and Matthew and Mark and Paul wrote, and breathe into them the power of the Holy Ghost—and this is something that most of the higher critics fail to take account of. The words are still, one by one, human words—fallible, liable to error; but, taken all together, they are to us Christians the Bible, the Word of God.

Once more. Men and women are severally and individually weak and mortal and erring creatures; but baptized by the One Spirit into the One Body, they constitute the Church of God and the Body of Christ. For on the day of Pentecost, nineteen hundred years ago, the Holy Ghost came down upon the disciples, according to the Lord's promise. They became conscious of a new power in mind and

heart. They were quickened and re-created, as it were, with a divine courage and a compelling vision of service to mankind; and their imperfect and struggling human society became the Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth.

And is it not one of the miracles of human history that this organization of the Christian Church, in spite of persecution from without and the weakness and selfish ambition of some of its own leaders from within, should have survived all changes and revolutions? Many doctrinal systems have been tried and discredited. Many philosophies have flourished and declined. Many kingdoms and governments have perished. But this Christian Church, with its story of God's redeeming love, is still carrying on the work and giving the gospel message to the world. And, as we see and recognize the power of God in that great past, let us take to our hearts the words of the Apostle Paul, as the pledge of blessing for the future, that "The God of hope may fill us with all joy and peace in believing, that we may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost." (Rom. 15:13.)

And, finally, brethren, let us pray God, the Holy Ghost, to sanctify and strengthen us: to

make us holy in body and in soul; to enlighten our minds with the Divine wisdom, and comfort our hearts with the Heavenly Peace. In our intellectual life we are face to face with many bewildering problems. We tread the labyrinth of the world. Only the Holy Spirit can guide us into truth. Only by prayer to him can we increase our faith. Only under his direction and by his help can we hope to transform the treasures of earthly knowledge and the experience of this mortal state into the enduring substance of high manhood and womanhood, of ennobling service and immortal life.

THE TEST OF TRANSLATION

THE TEST OF TRANSLATION

BY M. ASHBY JONES

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"Unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem." (Luke 24: 47.)

"Every man heard them speaking in his own language." (Acts 2: 6.)

It is a true instinct of human nature which leads our footsteps back to the birthplace of great men, or great enterprises, in search of their significance. So as we approach the nineteen hundredth anniversary of Pentecost, and are thinking of the centuries of history of the Christian Evangel, we turn so naturally to those words of the Founder of our religion, which gave the initial impulse to our gospel: "Unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem." We can all recall a familiar phrase in military parlance, "jumping-off place." It meant a place from which the army moved forward. In this sentence, Jerusalem means a "jumping-off place." It is significant that the Church for centuries translated this phrase "beginning *at* Jerusalem." The difference in prepositions is vital. Beginning *at* Jerusalem denotes a mere point of departure. Any point

might do to make a beginning, but *from* Jerusalem includes this and more. It reveals the source, the fountain, the dynamic, of the movement. "From Jerusalem" suggests a spring, with its perennial tide of refreshing life. Here Jerusalem is dynamic. It is not simply a beginning, but it is a sending power. This is the story of every truth which has ever seized the imaginations of men, and captured their convictions. When we follow the pathway of its progress backward to its source, we find that it had its beginning "from" some Jerusalem.

None of God's gifts have been dropped down from heaven, nor have they been bestowed in a general way to the world. They are born into the world, and their cradles are to be found in some cottage or stable. So every truth must have its Jerusalem. It must first have its revealing, convicting, and converting power in the mind and heart of some individual life. The Word must become flesh and dwell in some locality. It must get itself clothed in provincial customs, and utter itself in a local dialect. The reason is, truth needs the arena of human relations for human expression. So it must speak the language of those around it, and get itself interpreted in terms of local

conditions, limited by its local environment. Truth is only theoretical and academic until it can be translated into the solution of specific problems, answer distinct questions, and bear definite burdens. Homes and neighborhoods and provinces are the world's laboratories. Here are tried out its experiments, and here its discoveries and inventions are made. From these local environments have come all the great cures and the great creeds, the great songs and the great pictures. They first cured people in Jerusalem, were first sung in Jerusalem, and were first believed in Jerusalem. For this reason, every life must have its Jerusalem. We do not love in the abstract. We love certain people and places. Our sentiments twine themselves about the trees of our birthplace, sweeten the waters of the old well, color the hills and valleys of childhood, and sing their songs in the purling streams of our homeland. Artists do not sit down and paint beauty. They paint beautiful landscapes and places, which have seized their imagination and admiration. So truths are revealed to us in definite questions which must be answered, and which front us in terms of our own lives. Duties and obligations meet us in the narrow streets of Jerusalem, and call to us in the com-

pelling tones of familiar voices. Life is always inductive, proceeding from the particular to the general. The man who has no loyalties to his past can never be true to anything in the future. One who easily forgets his childhood will be insensitive to the obligations of manhood. Before one can love all humanity, he must learn to love some particular people. Jesus was not simply born into the flesh and dwelt among men. He was born in Bethlehem of Judea, of Jewish parents. He lived in Palestine, spoke the Aramaic language, and translated his truths into terms of the problems of his own day.

While truth must have its birthplace, and find its first expression in the life of some Jerusalem, it can never fulfill its mission until it moves on "unto all the nations." There has never been a divine gift intended for an individual, a neighborhood, or a nation. God loves humanity, because all men are his children. His truths are given to individuals, and they must learn them in terms of their own tongues and times. But all of his truths are messages for all men, and those who receive his truth must become messengers. The danger is ever present that men will identify the truth revealed with the form of its revelation. We very

properly write our discoveries of truth into creeds and principles, codes and constitutions. These very forms of expression tend to become sacred and authoritative. In these forms they are adequate for the day in which they are formulated, adapted to local conditions and temporal thought. The language is that spoken by the people of that day, and is readily understood by the people of that generation or locality. But with the ever-changing environments of place, time, and race, new problems arise for solution, new questions call for new answers, and new enterprises demand new motives. The test, then, of your truth or your formula is, whether it can speak a new language or assume a new form. Shall its words and phrases, its rules and rituals, become its prison, or even its casket? If the thought or sentiment or ideal, involved in a definition, enacted into a law, or promulgated in a creed, is incapable of being expressed in any other words, or of being adapted to any other form—if it is fixed and final—it is dead, and can no longer serve human need. Here is the deadly danger of all institutions. So often truth, to become effective in the lives of men, must be organized. Political principles become parties, philosophic theories find expression in

schools of thought with loyal disciples, and religious faith and aspirations become crystallized into Churches. The loyalty of the disciple was originally to the truth, the sentiment, or the ideal, and the organization was intended for its perpetuation. But as time goes on, the tendency is ever to subordinate the idea to the organization, and men's loyalty is transferred from a truth to an institution. If truth be forced into fixed forms, imprisoned in institutions, or limited by racial barriers, the spirit will take its flight. Humanity itself is the ultimate destination of any truth. "All the nations" is the only limitation to the footsteps of any divine messenger, and "Whosoever will" is the least invitation which can ever be upon the lips of one whom God sends into the world.

Christianity could not escape this law of life. There was a lure in the "upper chamber," with its familiar faces and beloved comradeship. The revelation of Jesus had come to a group of friends. He made himself known to them in terms of Andrew and Peter, John and Mary, and the rest of his disciples and comrades. He had spoken to them in the language of their childhood, and in figures of speech drawn from their provincial life. He was the

Son of Mary and Joseph, whom they knew, and his brethren and sisters were their friends. All the sacred associations and radiant spiritual beauty which he poured into their lives belonged in such an intimate way to them, and the human instinct is ever to guard and keep that which is sacred for your very own. When this man, whom they had known in the flesh—in the form of a Palestinian peasant—went beyond the vision of their eyes, the hearing of their ears, and the reach of their hands, what was left to them, and through them, to the world? The Word had become flesh, but was it identified with the flesh, and will it perish with the flesh? Or had it merely assumed the form of the flesh, and was it capable of casting aside this form and finding expression for itself in limitless other forms? Here is the significance of Pentecost. The story, as told in the Acts of the Apostles, is curiously sensational, and even bizarre. Tongues of fire were seen upon the heads of the disciples, and there was "the sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind." Here again it is so easy to cheat ourselves by a discussion as to the accuracy of the testimony concerning this experience. Did the Divine Spirit find expression in just the form described by Luke?

Such a discussion has little real value. There is, however, one significant sentence in this account, which, whether it has the accuracy of history or not, has proven its truth as prophecy. "Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And when this sound was heard, the multitude came together and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language."

To the multitude gathered on that day of Pentecost, the significance of the experience was simply the wonder that unschooled men had been miraculously enabled to speak foreign languages. But in the long perspective of the centuries we are enabled to discern a truth which is infinitely more meaningful. It is not nearly so important to discover that Palestinian peasants can speak foreign languages, as to discover that a Palestinian religion, which hitherto had been confined to the Aramaic dialect, was capable of speaking all the known languages of the nations. We must remember that the language of a people is the expression of the life of a people. Its vocabulary marks the limits of its ideas, and its idioms reveal the peculiar methods of its thought. The words of a people are saturated with their sentiments

and loyalties, their ideals and aspirations. Phrases and shibboleths tell the story of their past, and are prophetic with their hopes of the future. A language is fashioned and formed to meet the needs of life, and its peculiarities breathe the story of its triumphs and defeats, its joys and its sorrows. So it is true that anything which cannot be translated into the language of a people cannot be translated into their life. If Christianity could only find expression in the Aramaic language, then it could only live in the life of Aramaic-speaking people. So the question was still unanswered up to the day of Pentecost, Is this religion of Jesus a Jerusalem religion? Is it true only in Palestine, and can it function only under peculiar conditions of place and time? It had yet to prove that it could speak other languages, and live in other environments and experiences of life. It must meet the supreme test of translation. At Pentecost it broke through the walls of its environment, and came out of the tomb of its local form. It found its resurrection when it was proven that it could be translated into other tongues. When men heard its message spoken in their own language, then Christianity started "from Jerusalem unto all the nations."

Here is to be found the story of the triumphs and defeats of the Church. Not only each nation, but each age, and even each generation, meets the Church upon its threshold with the question, which is the supreme test, "Can you speak my language?" Because, in its last analysis, it means, can you translate your message into terms of my life? We must come to understand that the differences in languages are not simply racial, national, or geographical. Words grow with the unfolding life of a people, and their meaning changes to express the ever-changing conditions of human life. New words are coined to meet new situations, and names are fashioned for new ideas and ideals, which are born into human life. So each generation in every land questions the Church. Can its message be translated into terms of the problems of that generation, and answer the questions which vex the souls of men in that day? It has been a natural instinct of men, and a wholesome symptom of religious vitality, to seek to express from time to time their religious faith and aspirations in creedal statements. These statements reveal the viewpoint of their day, answer the questions of their time, and express in the language of their generation their spiritual experiences. Thus

they formulated the ideals which challenged their spirits, and called the people of their day to higher levels of living. This was also true in the creation of rituals, which symbolized the sentiments, and spoke to the emotions of men in a language which they understood. But the Church, in seeking to make their creeds and rituals the fixed and final forms of religious faith and aspiration, has insisted upon imposing these limitations of expression upon the souls of future generations. It was the fatal failure to understand that each generation must express its own life in its own language, and that truth lives on the lips of men. If it cannot be translated into the tongues of daily communication, it will cease to play a part in the lives of men. Here is to be found the explanation of the "dark ages" of the Church, and the philosophy of every genuine revival of religion. Whenever the Spirit of God finds free play in the souls of men, then every man hears the Christ message "in his own language."

The true function of the Church then is clearly revealed in this vital principle. In every age, in every land, and in every generation, the Church must furnish the Pentecostal experience of translating the religion of Jesus

into the living languages of men. So the Church must face to-day, with its social and industrial, its international and interracial, problems, and translate the message and the spirit of Jesus into terms of these issues. As unspeakably terrible as was the great war, there is no reason we should forget some of the very high and holy experiences which accompanied it. Though shocked and shaken to its foundation by surprise, and utterly unprepared to play any part in its prevention, the Church did rally wonderfully to meet the immediate tasks presented by this catastrophe. A common purpose challenged the unity of all of our people. Then we came together. It is significant to ask, Where did we come from? We came from our varied Jerusalems; from our provinces and parties, races and denominations. We took the sentiments and convictions, loyalties and loves, of our Jerusalem, and translated them into universal terms. We talked about world democracy, human rights, and universal peace. We spoke of "our boys," including every tribe and tongue, class and caste, race and creed, within our sympathetic consciousness. In that atmosphere of thought and feeling, we overcame insuperable difficulties and accomplished impossible tasks. Then

there came the terrible disillusionment. How quickly it was revealed that a conquest by arms did not mean a triumph of peace, and that a victory of force did not mean the realization of the high ideals for which we had entered the war. There followed perhaps the most pathetic period in the history of the Church. We had started with such high and holy enthusiasm "from Jerusalem unto all the nations," and when we had reached only the threshold of our great task, we turned back. The Church demobilized, and we returned to our "upper chambers" of parties, cliques, and denominations. We lost our universal language, and began to speak once again in provincial tongues. Now as we approach this significant anniversary of Pentecost, we meet again the test of translation. Can your Jerusalem religion speak the language of universal peace? Can the Church of Christ repeat the power and passion of Pentecost, by speaking the language of international and interracial friendship around the world?

Pentecost calls for a reinterpretation of the Christ commission to go into all the world and make disciples. It must no longer be given a mere geographical, or even racial, expression. All the world means all the life of the world.

It means carrying Christ and his spirit into all human relationships, and to do that it must get itself uttered in the language of all human relations. We may put a church on every hill-top and in every valley, but if we leave the commercial, social, and political areas of life unpossessed by the Spirit of Jesus, we have failed. It is not the mechanical method, familiar to every schoolboy, of searching for an English word to match a Greek word, in this task of translation. Something infinitely more is meant than the effort to find a formula of Jesus, with which to solve the political or social problems of to-day. But our search must be first for the spirit and principles of Jesus. We are to translate the Christ conception of "neighbor" and "brother" into the relationships of employer and employee, black and white. In some way, the Jesus comparison of the value of a sheep and a man must get itself uttered in the markets and in the factories of to-day's industrial life. It is on the streets, in the offices, and amid the buzz of bands and the whir of wheels of our industries, that men must meet the astounding experience of Pentecost, when they hear the Christ message spoken in their own language.

THE EARNEST OF OUR INHERITANCE

THE EARNEST OF OUR INHERITANCE

BY MERTON S. RICE

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"Sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance." (Eph. 1: 13, 14.)

THERE is something of very great fascination to my Christian life in the promise as written in this verse to the Ephesian brethren, a promise that looks expectantly toward the realization of the very thing every Christian life yearns to possess, and declares thus to bear a token of the experience which is the pledge of our heritage. There has always been something mysterious, in the handling of those who have cared to create mysterious situations in our doctrines, of over-mysterious representation in the relationship of the Holy Spirit to our Christian life. For that reason I have long found a very great help in this text verse as a frank, practical, open-to-inspection sort of a statement of what we are to give evidence to as Christian folks living in the realization of our rights. There is nothing here that can be overdrawn. There is nothing

here that will create confusion as to its reality. This is a statement of credential submission, not unlike that dispute-quieting and confidence-generating act of our risen Lord, when, coming before the troubled disciple whose doubt had almost driven him unto despair, he calmly held out his credentialed hands and said, "Reach hither thy finger." Even so, in the recognition of the justice of the appeal for substantial evidence of the claims about the Holy Spirit, we are told of the token, the pledge, an earnest of our inheritance.

There is an interesting rendering of this passage by Doctor Moffatt that compels our appreciation in the convincing plainness of its putting. "You also have heard the message of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, and in Him you also by your faith have been stamped with the seal of the long-promised Holy Spirit, which is the pledge and installment of our common heritage, that we may obtain our divine possession and so redound to the praise of His glory."

I would however leave the word "earnest" here, as used in the Authorized Version, and in the Revised Version as well, because it says so very well the refreshing fact I desire to see in evidence. There are only two other places in

the Bible where the word is used thus, and they are Pauline passages in the second book of Corinthians. It is a word taken from the language of the market place and signifies a deposit made by a purchaser in pledge of full payment. This is here then not to be confused as a mere pledge of the Spirit, but it is the Spirit himself in pledge of the fulfillment of the promise. "The earnest which is the Spirit" may be a perfectly correct manner of putting it. The earnest of our inheritance is the Holy Spirit himself.

There is something in Pentecost and in the whole interpretation of God's Spirit in the world, which must be infinitely more than a mere recurring event, no matter how interesting that event may have been or may be, an event which we set in our Church calendars as significant in a special Sabbath of the year. God's Spirit in this world is not a matter that can be set for calendar recognition. He is here in an abiding earnest of our inheritance.

I saw an interesting question in an essay from the pen of that always thought-inspiring writer, Dr. J. Brierley. He asked, "Can we repeat Pentecost?" And then offered this searching comment upon his question: "There is nothing more doleful than attempts at

spiritual repetitions." I am sure that out of that very pertinent observation arises a matter of very great importance for the whole Christian Church which is making, and properly so, preparation in expectant consideration of one of the very greatest events in all the religious story of our race.

The Holy Spirit is a constant presence of our religion. He is not to be by us persuaded somewhat reluctantly to come among us for the celebration in mere honor of a fact which happened long ago, and which is thenceforth to be made an event of remembrance. Pentecost is not a matter of the calendar. The particular date of its happening and the certain rhythmic number of the years since its happening are not to make itas an event of any more meaning than any other combination of dates. It was of just as much importance to the whole Church last year as it will be in the spring of the year nineteen hundred and thirty. It would be a spiritual tragedy indeed for the whole Church of God on earth to-day, if by eager propaganda, and by planned services, we should send the Church out upon this great spiritual fact to a mere celebration of an anniversary, and thereby should fail to bring ourselves into the actual realization of the

possession of which the now present Holy Spirit has insured us.

Pentecost must not be resolved into an event which happened on this earth nineteen hundred years ago. We are soon to recognize the fact that the Christian Church has reached its nineteen hundredth anniversary. That we can celebrate. That we most surely should celebrate. I am sure, however, I speak correctly, and in harmony with the response made by some Christian leaders of our day, who upon a request made to them for assistance in some services in celebration of Pentecost replied, that in their opinion the very last thing the Holy Spirit desired for himself was a celebration. The thing now which is altogether befitting the Christian Church in its newly aroused interest in that which gave it birth, and sent it out, little but irresistible, into a world of sin to bring it all in as a trophy to be laid one great victorious day at the foot of the Cross of Christ, is that we, emboldened by the promise, and presumptive by the commission, and trusting in the presence, shall go forth actually sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance.

God in the Church! That is our claim. That is our liability. We dare declare the

fact. The world judges us under such a claim. I am going to dare, even in the face of the very imperfect efforts we have thus far made, and before the many defeats we have been compelled to suffer, and before the skepticism our failures have produced, to declare my faith in the fact of the incorporated presence of the Holy Spirit in the whole story of the Christian Church, as the only explanation that can be advanced for the persistence of the hope abiding in the Church to-day. Much, very much doubtless, of what we have done, has been shamefully far from what it should have been. Both individually as Christians, and collectively as the Church, we must recognize that nothing but the actual presence of God's Spirit with us could ever have made explanation of our continued work here. It is that great something the Apostle Paul made frequent mention of, that satisfying confidence which he found ever available. In every circumstance, out of every trial, beyond every suffering, he was always sure he could absolutely fall back upon God. That is exactly what this word "earnest" as used here means. "The earnest of his Spirit." I believe it has been introduced here by Paul, as a new word in the spiritual vocabulary. He was not

afraid to lift it out of the market place, where he found it, and of which it is flavored, and use it as a binding declaration of contract that the Spirit himself is God's pledge to us of the fulfillment of the promises.

How can it ever be that we who call ourselves Christians could ever lose heart or hope in our cause? Let us never speak a word of discouragement from a drooping heart of a Church, or of an individual claiming our God on this earth. Such an inheritance of divine pledge should set us confidently in the midst of every challenging thing this world could bring, and make us there refuse to be discouraged, and perfect us in the purposes of patience, and forbid us ever to give place to doubt. This, by the Holy Spirit, is the earnest of our inheritance. It is surely time that with such a pledge we should set a conquering Church in every field. Not because the fields have become easy. The fields have absolutely nothing to do with it. Difficulty is no word for us to plead while we dare boast of the earnest of an ominpotent God. Just what difficulty may mean when spoken before ominpotence I do not pretend to be able to reckon. I do know that our assurance is founded upon the presence of God with us, and

as for me I have an abounding satisfaction based upon that sufficient fact. The Holy Spirit with us most certainly warrants us in expectant yearning to see now the actual lives of men and women, just as saintly and just as Spirit-filled as were any of those of any of the days which are now so long gone as to seem a bit unreal by their distance. Because we have the earnest of the Spirit of God, we should now, and always, hear among us the persuasive and prophetic voices of preachers as mighty as were those who moved Jerusalem to revival, or sent Antioch to its knees, or compelled the sin-ridden life of Rome to hear the word, or set Florence aflame with shouts to make Jesus King. Because we have now the earnest of the Spirit of God, we as a Church can bring no excuse for being any less effective, and less abundant in labors than any other Church anywhere, or any other time. Every city, with all its crowding carelessness and rampant pleasures haunted by sin, should be swept by tremendous impulses and convictions while unrighteousness is driven from its streets, because we have the earnest of the Spirit of God. The dark places of all the earth should be lighted. The waste places should be gardened The wildernesses should burst to

bloom. All this is the earnest of our inheritance, and we feel a very great confidence in it all because it is sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

With two unbreakable words our text has holden God to our task. Both these words should keep within the Church the evident confidence of assured victory, and set a conduct unto an undiscourageable program across the whole world's life. The two God-holding words are "seal" and "earnest." We have his seal and his earnest that the way of his Church is unto victory. Never mind what may seem to arise before us as reputed signs of the times. The pledge and promise of God are always beyond them. It is the assured cheer of the fair-weather flag I saw the weather man hoist to the pole while it rained. The very sky seemed in deluge, but the brave white flag fairly whipped itself dry in its defiant flutter in the rain. I was glad for it. I did not care to see a rain flag in the rain. I knew it was raining. But to hang a white flag for fair weather right in the rain was a promise that carried defiance, and it cheered me. This is the work of the irresistible confidence attending the Church across the ages. Nothing but the fact of the presence of the

Spirit of God in the Church can ever furnish an explanation of the Church. Let us not be mistaken in our anticipation. Let us recognize the fact that our Lord told his disciples of the coming of a greater day than any they had known while he was present with them in the flesh. Jesus talked much, as the Cross came closer and closer to him, of something which was to take place which would more than compensate them for his going away. That great event was to be the coming of the Holy Spirit. He was to be the attendant power with which they were to go confidently forward in the commissioned conquest of the world. From him the disciples were to take their courage. With him the disciples were to do, according to Jesus himself, even greater things than he had done. And even after Easter, the words of the risen Lord were spoken forward with the very same temper. When he made ready his ascension he left them the renewed assurance of the Holy Spirit. This was to be the one great endowing event that would make of the Church the Church of the Living God.

This must now therefore be the distinct character of the Church, God's Spirit must be upon it. If this is so, the world has then a perfect right to expect great things of us. If

this is not so, then the Church can claim no distinction from any other organization of good ideals among us. This then becomes our great endowment, and our great obligation as well. If we are endued with God's Spirit, there can be brought no excuse for failure to produce results in keeping with the fact. It is a situation which will often force upon us as an organization, and upon us as individual souls as well, a conduct in trust which will prove our claim.

There have been times when it has seemed the world has arisen to crush out and utterly destroy the Church; times when opposition has seemed so strong that hope had no ray evident in the gloom. Just then has been the opportune time to practice the presence of God's earnest. There has always been a power that could change situations, something that could scatter the ships of the approaching armada upon a hundred rocky shores, and preserve the seeming weak one in strange security. All this must not be cherished as mere history. This must be true to-day. God's Spirit is upon his Church. He did not come to be but a casual and temporary visitor here, only to be willing to return upon the persuasive pleading of his Church that shall

have found itself in desperation in its unaided limitations. What we need to-day, and what the world eagerly awaits in us, is that venturing boldness which will presume upon the presence of the Spirit, and go out to produce just what such a Church should produce.

Seventy-five years ago there was written one of the most vital spiritual books that was ever set going in the Church's life. A copy of it was given to my father, then a young preacher, by Bishop G. F. Pierce, of the Methodist Church, South, and was a treasured volume in his library, till a glad day in my earlier ministry when he gave the book somewhat in the nature of an entrustment to me, and it occupies a favored place among my books to-day. It is William Arthur's volume entitled "The Tongue of Fire." To this day, amid all the later and more methodically prepared volumes upon the essential subject, I go to gather my inspirational reading from the old volume. I have wished it might be revised a little in some of its illustrations, all of which are powerful; but I cannot but wonder what in our newer day he would have found more brilliantly to illustrate his ever essential arguments. Even as it stands it is an unfailing tonic to me. Toward the close of the book he

has a passage carrying this appeal, though not just clothed in this language. Is it possible that we can find any conclusive argument for such a very depressing idea that the Spirit of God has spent his strength, and that we are now experiencing just what we should expect to find, a time of real feebleness succeeding a season of power? I have not personally the power to set to words just what such an argument as that would compel upon our whole idea of God. This day of ours offers excuse for its not being susceptible to the influence of Christianity, as found in the proud fact that it is a most cultured, and intellectual, and scientific age. Are we therefore to hold to so cheap an idea of divinity as to agree that we must sit humbly to await some less enlightened and less educated age after this one shall have been overthrown by some dire calamity, such as professed prophets who like to draw upon the past for parallels for the future love to predict? As a preacher of the great gospel of our saving Lord I confess to be unable myself to discover by any suggested catalogue of difficulties that has ever been collected to find any acceptable reason for any professed failure. We must not seek excuse for failure in the cause of an omnipotent God in any opposition. The only

way those of other days ever produced greater results than we of to-day seem to be granted, is to be explained only because of the freer manifestation of the Spirit of God within them.

The Holy Spirit does not withhold himself from us, only to await our persuasion of him to come. He has never withdrawn himself from us. He is more eager than his Church has ever been to live in and work through us, unto the complete work of the winning of this world.

The eloquent fact which must be recognized by our Church to-day, if it is to be the Church of the Living God, is that along with every advancement goes also the Church of God. I say that, not without thorough appreciation of the power and the subtlety of the gigantic forces which are fighting against the truth. All that, however, but confirms me in my confidence in the "earnest of our inheritance." One brilliant passage from Doctor Arthur sounds as though it had been written but yesterday, and ready to be published to-morrow, rather than three-quarters of a century ago, "Many who dogmatically repel error evaporate in intellectualism. Others decay under a silvered mildew of respectability. Others, professing to seek the old Christianity, content themselves with garnishings, the sep-

ulcher in which the Middle Ages buried it, instead of seeking that her people in spirit and power should be once more raised among us."

I hope my clinging thus in my closing words to this old book may be able to impress upon all who may honor these words of mine by even a passing attention, that the actual facts of the Holy Spirit in his relationship to his people do not change with the passing of years or centuries. We are to find now in our reverent interest toward an observance of Pentecost that the essential truth of all spiritual experience is as changeless as the character of God. The reality of religion is not a fickle thing dependent upon human conditions. The closing word of "The Tongue of Fire" is a prayer, the earnest use of which is just as essential to all of us to-day as it ever was, and as it always will be.

"And now, adorable Spirit proceeding from Father and Son, descend upon all the Church. Renew the Pentecost in this our age, and baptize all Thy people! O baptize us all again with tongues of fire. Crown this century with a revival of pure and undefiled religion, greater than that of any other century in demonstration of the Spirit."

For this we humbly wait, and in our waiting

let us tune every delay we shall experience unto an expectation which shall be founded confidently upon the promise we hold and will never doubt; "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance."

WHEN THE SPIRIT IS COME

WHEN THE SPIRIT IS COME

BY WILLIAM EDWARD SNYDER

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"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, . . . he shall glorify me." (John 16: 13, 14.)

THE ministry of John the Baptist looked toward the coming of Jesus. The ministry of Jesus looked toward the coming of the Spirit. That was made plain in the Upper Room conversation on that last night. Jesus was to go away, and the disciples were sad. They felt that his going could mean nothing less than disaster. He would leave many things to be desired. But the Master had provided for all that, for he leaves no gaps in his work, no chasms unbridged. Through the ages one "unceasing purpose runs," and he could well say to those despairing disciples on that eventful night, "Let not your heart be troubled."

The promise of the Spirit supplied a basis for hope that would supplant despair, and nerve the disciples for the worst that could possibly take place between the setting and the rising of the sun. It was enough to know they would not be left "orphans." There was light ahead, though it was hard for them to understand,

and to trust, and to be comforted. Their faith was not fully equal to the occasion. But the assurance was theirs: "When the Spirit of truth is come," he will do for you all that I have been doing—and more—yes, vastly more; and in all this "he will glorify me." Therefore, "it is expedient for you that I go away."

"Expedient that I go!" Strange language that! It could be understood only when the Spirit actually came. Many a dark saying, or dark problem, must wait for the clarifying function of the Spirit. It may have seemed that Jesus was making a confession of weakness, putting a discount on himself. But that would have been an erroneous interpretation of his language. Had he not amply proven his omnipotence? and his omniscience also? More and more the disciples had come to the point of believing that he could do all things, and that he knew all things. They had said so again and again, in plain words and by implication. But there were some respects in which he was limited. In the flesh he was local. They needed a universal Presence. He could commune with them only in the vernacular language; they needed a language that was apprehended by the heart—a universal language He was limited by the flesh; they needed One who was

not subject to physical limitations, One who had the freedom of the universe. He was preparing them for the coming of that One. In that work of preparation they also had a part. Between his going and the Spirit's coming a gap was to be bridged by waiting—waiting supported and buttressed by faith and prayer and expectancy. They supplied the bridge—and, according to promise, the Spirit came.

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And when the Spirit came the disciples thought not less, but more, of Christ. That was because the Spirit always bears witness to Christ; he exalts Christ; he glorifies Christ; he takes the things of Christ and shows—interprets—them to believers. It so occurred to those early disciples. They understood Christ, appreciated him, loved him, and honored him far more under the Spirit's ministry than when he was with them in person. They went forth as fiery heralds, to spread abroad his truth, ready to pay the price for such a privilege, even unto bonds and imprisonment and death. Christ's name and fame and honor were safe when committed to the Spirit.

One's attitude toward Christ indicates the measure of the Spirit's presence in his life, for it is yet the function of the Spirit to bear

witness to him and exalt him in the human heart. He begets a love for Christ, and thus we know whether the Spirit has come into our own hearts. His presence means that Christ has been born anew within us, and with a growing love for our divine Lord we know that the Holy Spirit has increased sway, increased mastery, over all the powers of our being, to destroy the bad and enhance the good. Christ abides as a blessed companion, a guide and helper only through the Spirit's indwelling.

And what is true of the individual is true of the Church. It is true of the whole world also. It is the Spirit that makes Christ safe for the world. Otherwise he is known only "after the flesh," only as a historical character, to be accorded such love and veneration as Plato or Socrates, or Aristotle, or perhaps a Savonarola, a Wycliffe, or a Luther. Thus he would live only in books, or possibly in art, or perchance in an institution that might serve to perpetuate his name. He could not be a present, living, working personality in a world that needs him more than it needs anything or anyone else. He could not be a match for humanity's ills.

Does not that suggest the danger he faces in the world to-day? The danger he always has faced and always will face, except for the work

of the Spirit? Men are seeking to divest him of his spiritual kingship, the majesty of his deity, and the glory of his authority. But the Spirit remains as a defense against such fearful, deadly error. He enthrones Christ in the heart of the individual and of the Church. And while the Spirit abides Christ abides; not as a mere historical personage, but as the divine Son of God, the Saviour of men; the redeeming power in a world gone wrong, "the fairest of ten thousand and the One altogether lovely."

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When the Spirit comes he spiritualizes the believers. He touches the mind as well as the heart, and mere intellectual conceptions of truth become convictions of truth. That insures the virility and perpetuity of the Church. Christianity never has depended, never will depend, wholly upon intellectual conceptions of truth, however fine and beautiful and helpful they may be. Truth must go deeper, stir men's emotions, and burn as fire in their bones. Men don't suffer and die for that which is apprehended by the intellect only. It is the truth they feel, the truth that pulsates in their entire being, that sends them forth as heroes and makes them invincible in the face of

danger and difficulty. One may be perfectly orthodox and be unmoved by his orthodoxy. Theology cannot save the world. In fact, it cannot save an individual. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness," and heart belief becomes a reality only by the Holy Spirit.

Paul understood this. He was speaking out of an inward experience when he declared that "no one can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Spirit." Strange doctrine that, to the person who is accustomed only to the cold intellectual process. Of course, Paul knew that anyone could give intellectual assent to the Lordship of Christ, if it were presented in the form of a creed. He knew also that in their own wisdom men never could solve the mystery of Christ or form an adequate conception of his deity and Lordship. He knew it by his own failure, for only a revelation from above had put him right on this vital question. And Paul knew men. He knew that his own limitation marked the limitation of mankind in general. In his own weakness he had sensed the weakness of his fellows. Even the greatest minds have stumbled in their unaided efforts to explain Jesus. Explanations, couched in terms of human wisdom, no matter how they may

seek to exalt him, always are unsatisfactory. They degrade the infinite Son of God by attempting to bring him within the limits of the finite. Some truths must be felt rather than understood, which ultimately becomes the highest kind of understanding. Paul was placing the Lordship of Christ in that category.

And he had historical precedent for this. When Peter confessed his faith in the Christ as the Son of the living God, he was assured that no flesh-and-blood process had brought him to that spiritual altitude—not a logical deduction but a revelation from the Father. Had not Peter been told that Christ was the Son of God? Was that a new idea with the apostolic company? Surely the "idea" was not new, but the "conviction" was new. It came by a new birth, and meant a new creature; for, in the mind of Peter, Christ became a new creature, a greater Christ than he had known him to be before; and that made Peter a new creature. When one's soul gets a vision of the Lordship of Christ, he cannot be the same again. It means to each individual what Isaiah's temple vision meant to him.

Jesus was not forward to tell his disciples that he was the Son of God. He waited for them to come to that knowledge by a different

route. He sometimes gave instructions not to tell it to others. Did he not want others to know? Yea verily, but he knew there was no such short cut, no such easy road, to spiritual enlightenment. Intellectual assent to a creed is no substitute for the truth that grips the heart and produces fruit in a changed life, in Christlike living and serving. Jesus waited for men to believe with the heart that he was Lord, and then to confess of their own accord. Then he admitted it, and pronounced upon them his commendation and blessing for the discovery they had made.

No, we cannot dispense with reason in religion, but we do well to remind ourselves that we need something more. We need the Spirit of God. We need that which enlightens the heart. The greater part of our religious differences, the meagerness of our fruitage, and our regrettable failures result from the head process in a realm where the heart should have preëminence. Intellectuality is cold, and often narrow, and still more often selfish, unless tempered by an emotional nature which has felt the divine touch, and been made to throb with the divine passion. Not less intellect, but more spiritual quickening, is the demand of the hour. The Holy Spirit still is needed as

much as ever, if God's people are to crown Jesus Christ as Lord in a way that will make his Lordship a reality in conviction and experience, and in the leadership of the Church.

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When the Spirit is come he will Christianize our religion. The statement may seem paradoxical; and so it is, but it is not facetious. For religion and Christianity are not always synonymous. Even the religion that has upon it the Christian label and purports to have its source in Christ is not always the religion that Jesus revealed and exemplified. Sometimes our Christian zeal is manifested in an unchristian manner and in an unchristian spirit. That is abundantly demonstrated in history, where the rack and thumbscrew and other instruments of torture remain to bear witness to man's Christian zeal expressed in anything but a Christian manner.

In the "Bonnie Brier Bush" we have the pathetic portrayal of a character who was so regular in his faith that he erased the name of his daughter, whom he loved dearly, from the Church book when she took her first wayward step. Old Lachlan Campbell was conscientious, so much so that he sacrificed his finer fatherly instincts upon the altar of his

rigid regularity in the faith. He failed to get the Spirit of Christ from the Gospel narratives with which he was so familiar, failed even to catch the meaning of the parable of the lost sheep. We are gratified to know that Lachlan Campbell learned better before it was too late, and lived to enjoy the deeper truth and the more satisfying experience of the Christ passion in his soul and to exemplify it in the presence of the daughter who had suffered so much from his iron-clad but Christless orthodoxy. The Holy Spirit in one's life helps to fit his theological tenets into a purpose and program and passion of love, which gives fragrance instead of bleakness to his faith, and makes it attractive even to those who do not know Christ.

How that change was wrought in the lives of the disciples when the Spirit came on Pentecost! They became more zealous and earnest; but that was not the most important change. They were different in the deepest element of character. Now there was no disposition to call fire down from heaven upon those who opposed them. They were moved with a mastering impulse to save rather than to destroy. Salvation became the dominant note among them—in keeping with the Master's

purpose "to seek and to save that which was lost." Resentment toward the wicked was dissolved into patience and forbearance, and especially into that love which "suffereth long and is kind."

Thus the Spirit changes the letter of the Lord's teaching into the spirit of his law. "The letter killeth," the Bible declares. One may be filled with the letter and be destructive in his attitude, harsh and exacting and even repulsive. But "the Spirit giveth life." When one is filled with the Spirit he becomes constructive, a builder, a coworker with his Lord in the enterprise of saving people from sin and building them into the kingdom of heaven. So the coming of the Spirit and his abiding presence in the Church mean the perpetuation of the character of Christ in such a way that the world may see him and be drawn unto him. It means Christ living in his people in this present world.

And not only does it mean Christ living in this world, but it means Christ working in this world. So long as the Spirit is among us the work of Christ is going on, and will go on in the face of every hindrance. The gates of hell will not prevail against the Church when it is animated and actuated and motivated by the

indwelling Spirit. He is its life, its strength, its beauty, and its glory.

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When the Spirit came upon the disciples it was demonstrated how much could be done with a minimum of organization and of human-devised program. A little while before this we see the disciples talking organization there in the upper room. One of their number called attention to a defect in their organization and urged that it be rectified at once. Judas's place was vacant and an election must be held. And the election was held, the results announced, but it was never heard of afterwards. It must have been utterly forgotten in that Pentecostal experience which followed later. In fact, the whole organization must have been pretty well battered, and whatever they had devised in the nature of a program evaporated in the heat of those tongues of flame.

When the Spirit comes the holy urge of the heart will lift the servant of Christ above mere human inventions. What a helpless thing is organization without power! How humiliating it is to set goals which seem to mock us and lay bare our weakness, a thing which happens when inward vitality is lacking. And when

there is inward vitality how little attention we pay to goals! The Spirit becomes his own program, his own machinery, his own goals. What rejoicing there would be in many a Church to-day if just such a thing should come to pass! Our people are weary of goals that we do not reach. They have seen so much machinery that does not function. They are familiar with programs that never seem to come to a definite issue. So it is not more program that we need. We have enough of program, God knows. In many cases it is a burden grievous to be borne, like those which the Jewish teachers had bound upon the backs of the common people in the days of Jesus. What we need is life and power to make our programs living things.

People are conscious that something is lacking, and are hungering for reality in religion. They yearn for the fruits of a virile faith. When the Spirit is come the thing for which they hunger will be realized. Life will take the place of machinery, or rather take its place in machinery, and make it vibrate with power. An overflowing joy, a holy impulse, will be the incentive to service and there will be no disposition to set up stakes by which to gauge our efforts. Where there is life there

is action, there is growth, there is fruit, there is warmth and fragrance and power. And it is life in the Church in all its channels of effort that is made a reality by the coming of the Spirit.

Now we are approaching the nineteenth centennial of that first Pentecost which gave us true Christianity and the true Christian Church. We look back to that momentous occasion with wonder; and more so with regret that there has been so little repetition of it in all our history. True, we have had gracious outpourings of the Spirit, unusual manifestations of divine power, refreshing seasons of grace, and yet it remains to be seen just what a full repetition of Pentecost would mean in the life of the modern Church. Imagination staggers at the possibility of a general outpouring of divine power on the Church of to-day with its equipment, its intelligence, and its perspective of nineteen centuries of history. And our hearts cry out for just such a manifestation. We look, not back nineteen hundred years, but forward and upward and inward, to the Pentecost we need now, and we pray: O Master, come quickly in the person of the Holy Spirit,

"With all thy quickening powers
Kindle a flame of sacred love
In these cold hearts of ours."

Prayer

Our gracious Lord, Thou hast taught us in thy Word that we "do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Holy Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered." We are conscious of our dependence upon the Spirit, and we thank Thee that Thou didst send him into the world. We thank Thee for what we have learned of him through our own experience of his presence in our hearts, and his guiding influence and his comforting, sustaining power. We thank Thee that through him we have come to a clearer and deeper knowledge of Christ, and that we thus love Christ better and appreciate him more, for the Spirit is continually taking the things of Christ and showing them to us. He has made Christ more real and his redemptive work in our lives more complete. Accept our gratitude, our thanksgiving for all the Spirit has done for us, and for all that he has been to us. And we pray that his work may continue within us, for we are painfully conscious of our weaknesses. We fail so often—fail in our strivings after the ideals Thou hast

revealed to us, fail in our efforts to represent Christ in character or to do his will acceptably in service. We come to Thee with chastened spirits, and seek the continued help of the Spirit in all that is yet incomplete within us and in the yet uncompleted tasks that are before us. May the Spirit give us strength and wisdom and the disposition to learn from our mistakes and to profit by them. And while we feel and acknowledge our incompleteness and unworthiness may we through the Spirit's help make some progress day by day, that Christ more and more may be revealed and glorified within us. What we ask for ourselves we ask for people everywhere who suffer and struggle and aspire, and who, like us, are utterly helpless and wretched without the presence of the Holy Spirit. And this we ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.

CALVARY AND PENTECOST

CALVARY AND PENTECOST

BY SAMUEL PETER SPRENG
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"Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified." (Acts 2:36.)

THESE two great events, Calvary and Pentecost, closely linked together, stand out like two vast mountain peaks on the watershed of history, and from them flows a stream of life and light through all the subsequent centuries, with ever-deepening current, through an ever-widening channel, until to-day the weary souls of many nations quench their thirst of spirit with its refreshing waters—Calvary, where the Son of God made reconciliation for the sin of the world, and Pentecost, where the living Church of Jesus Christ was born and sent forth on her mission to witness to the saving power of the crucified and risen Saviour of the world. These two supreme events, standing in a very vital sense related to each other as cause and effect, challenge our thoughtful and prayerful interest to-day as we seek to relate ourselves anew, by obedience and faith, to

them as the central sources of spiritual power, and seek to realize all that they are intended to mean to us of the twentieth century of the Christian era.

The apostle Peter, in his inspired sermon on the day of Pentecost, made a most brilliant and effective use of the relation between Calvary and Pentecost, in the peroration and climax of his overwhelmingly persuasive and convincing appeal, when he asserted that Pentecost was meant in reality to demonstrate the Lordship of Jesus, and did demonstrate it. That first Pentecost overwhelmingly proved that those who crucified and tortured Jesus of Nazareth were wrong, were fighting vainly against the eternal God and against his purpose. It proved that the rejected Christ was the chosen of God. It removed from the minds of the first disciples the last lingering misgiving as to the genuineness of the Messianic function of Jesus of Nazareth, as to his identity with the Messiah of Hebrew prophecy, and, above all things, revealed the fact that the crucified and rejected Nazarene was and is forever indeed the Saviour of the world. So irresistibly convincing was the demonstration, so appealing the course and logic of events that, under its power, three thousand lives were that day

changed in their attitude and relation toward Jesus. Among these were no doubt some who on that apparently fatal day had joined the raucous cry of the multitude calling for his crucifixion. But now they saw him in a new light. Their prejudices melted away, their hatred of him was made to goad them into penitence, and their new vision of him, as they saw him in the amazing light of that Pentecostal revelation, inspired them to accept him as the Lord of their life. The cross, which had been used as the instrument of his humiliation, torture, and death, became that day the blood-red banner of a new crusade and the crucifiers themselves became the heralds of the crucified.

I

The great objective of all that Jesus did and suffered and ordained is the salvation of the human race from sin and its effects. His incarnation, his life and teaching, his suffering and vicarious death, his resurrection and ascension, and the climax of all, the gift of the Holy Spirit, crowded as they were into a few brief years, and linked together in a wonderful chain of logically successive events and deeds, all taken together were to create the power through which the world was to be

evangelized and given the opportunity to be saved. The life, character, and death of Jesus created that moral dynamic which was absolutely essential to the vast purpose of God for the world, and the Holy Spirit was given to create and empower the agency through which the message of the gospel was to penetrate into the remotest and darkest jungles of this inhabited planet and into the deepest and darkest recesses of the human heart. The atonement made by Jesus Christ, through his death and resurrection, made salvation possible to every human being. But in order that potentiality might become reality, in order that promise might become experience, the story must be told, the message must be proclaimed; men must know the truth before the truth can make them free.

First-hand knowledge of the essential facts concerning the person, life, teaching, and work of Jesus Christ was given the little group of the first disciples. They were witnesses of all that Jesus said and did. But not until the Holy Spirit in final fullness came into their conscious experience on that first Christian day of Pentecost were they able to understand the implications and bearing of these great though simple facts in their relation to the redemptive

plan and purpose of God for the world. Jesus must first of all become a personal experience. For only those who know can tell. Only those who possess can impart. Only those who have experienced can witness or testify. Only those who are saved can save others. Only those who are with Christ can lead men to him. Only those who are alive from the dead can impart life to the dead.

Hence the need of the gift of the Holy Spirit. For he by his coming in infinite fullness upon the infant Church assembled in the upper room created the organized agency for the promulgation of the gospel. Without that even the marvelous events of the life of Jesus would have become nothing more than historical fact. But the Holy Spirit came upon that infant Church in order to make it possible through her to transform the Fact of Christ into Force. It is the Holy Spirit who by his indwelling transforms the timid follower into a bold confessor, because he gives to the individual believer the understanding of the mystery of redemption, and generates the inner vital urge to go forth and tell the story, the story that transforms the lives of men and of nations. This is above all things the need of the Church to-day—a new empowering for

witnessing. If ever the gospel is to be effectively proclaimed to all the world, it must be done by men and women not only organized into an effective agency, but that agency kindled into sacrificial zeal and driven by an irrepressible urgency, by an unquenchable passion for the lost, which only the Holy Spirit can and does impart. The new Pentecostal experience which we pray may become universal in the universal Church can and will eventuate in a new and more potent evangelism than the Church has known for centuries. It will result in a crusade—not to rescue the open and empty tomb from the hand of the Saracen, but a crusade with the living Christ to carry the Cross of Calvary as a living power into the heart of the world and to the uttermost bounds of human habitation, to transform human society and to establish the kingdom of God in all the relationships of corporate as well as individual human life. For Pentecost and evangelization are inseparably united. They go together as cause and effect, as incentive and process, as dynamic and method.

II

The Holy Spirit is Christ's ascension gift to his Church and people. He is the last great

gift of God to the world through his redeemed people. He is the final and full revelation of the triune God for the purpose of redemption. For redemption is the most absorbing achievement of the eternal God, so far as we know, in all time. Redemption called into action the deepest energies of the triune God—God the Father, in whose heart of love the thought and plan of redemption had its birth; God the Son, through whose incarnation, life, death, and resurrection the eternal purpose of God for mankind became a historical reality; and God the Holy Spirit, through whose activity and indwelling the purpose of the Father and the sacrificial work of the Son are made potential and real in the hearts of those who believe in Jesus.

For this purpose and function he was given as the final, culminating manifestation of the redeeming God. Before that the Holy Spirit had been given "by measure." He was given in the former dispensation to individual men and women, often isolated and widely separated, to a prophet here and another there. But now in these last days "he giveth not the Spirit by measure." (John 3: 34.) But on that first day of Pentecost he came upon the infant Church, sent forth from the Father and

the Son, in all the plenitude of regenerating and sanctifying energy and with final authority, not only to work the marvel of personal salvation in the consciousness of believers, but to send them out as personal witnesses who could and would testify to what they themselves had felt and seen by infallible signs and proofs. And the thing that he taught and urged and empowered them to witness was the transforming power of the Cross. He came on that natal day of the Christian Church, signalizing the new order, the new Dispensation, and he came to abide until the end of the days. He came nineteen centuries ago, *and he has never been withdrawn.* He is here now in all the plenitude of his authority and gifts, to do for the Church of Christ to-day just what he did for the apostolic Church then. The day of miracles is not past. Miracles of grace are being wrought in millions of believing hearts. If only the Church of believing souls would utterly yield themselves to him, as did those first disciples! He is here, like a great and mighty flood tide, pressing in upon us, but alas, held back partly unconsciously by our failure to yield to the pressure of his will. We are afraid to let go. We are seemingly afraid of being engulfed by the flood of spiritual

power that is ready to turn itself loose upon us and turn us loose upon the world. The work of the Holy Spirit is centered in Jesus Christ. One is impressed with this as one reads again the assurances of Jesus in those marvelous self-revelations of his, recorded in the Gospel by St. John. Jesus calls him "The Comforter." (Moffatt and Goodspeed render it "Helper.") He is the stand-by, the companion, in whose spiritual presence Jesus himself is present. He is the Spirit of Truth. (John 14: 16.) He repeats and reënforces the teaching of Jesus. "He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said unto you." (John 14: 26.) "He shall bear witness of me." (John 15: 26.) "He shall guide you into all truth." (John 16: 13.) "He shall glorify me." (John 16: 14.) And in the work of evangelism he will "convict the world in respect of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged" (John 16: 8–11)—thus doing the initial work of evangelism, preparing the way for salvation. We may be sure that when the Holy Spirit comes again into the Church in his

fullness of power, there will come also to this generation the poignant consciousness of sin in individual life and that will spread to the community, the city, the nation. This is the fundamental need of the hour—a new sense of sinfulness. There can be no salvation from sin until it is preceded by repentance, and repentance must come as a result of conviction for sin. Hence it is indispensable that the Church herself should come with her message of salvation in perfect loyalty to her divine Lord, who saves from sin.

III

This renewal of the Pentecostal experience, so devoutly prayed for and wished for, will give the Church many things which she needs more now than ever. She can never hope to conquer the world and win it to her Christ with carnal weapons, with machinery and programs or large sums of money. Spiritual results are attained only by spiritual means. It is an axiom of science that there can be no effect without an adequate cause. When the Holy Spirit comes upon us, he may and very likely will use the machinery of the Church in so far as it is adaptable and usable. But he will have his own program. He will choose

his own instrumentalities and personalities, and will use his own methods. "For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God." (2 Cor. 10: 4.) "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, . . . against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Eph. 6: 12.) But if we will let him harness our machinery and organization to his spiritual power the desired results can and will be achieved.

This is preëminently, especially in our so-called Western civilization, a materialistic age. It is very aptly called the machine age. Things of time and sense, material values are uppermost in the thinking of men. The world worships the gods of iron and steel and whirling wheels which it has made. It has been caught in the meshes of its own making and prefers to stay enmeshed in its own fabric. No mere human power can extricate this age from its gross materialism. No amount of learning and scholarship and eloquence can break the spell, unless that scholarship and eloquence be made alive and mighty by the inflow of the spiritual current of divine life. Some one has suggestively said that the Holy Spirit is the electric current of the moral universe.

If men are to be regenerated, it must be by the Spirit of God applying the resurrection power of the risen Christ to their souls that are dead in their trespasses and their sins. There is no other power that is adequate. The Holy Spirit, working through a Spirit-filled ministry and Church, will bring the sinner and his Saviour together. He will bring the almighty Saviour of men into their lives. No one else can do that. It is only thus that there will be made possible the reëstablishment of spiritual values and spiritual ideals.

It is not a hopeless situation. The eternal mountains are full of horses and chariots. The divine resources are inexhaustible. But we must link ourselves anew with them. This is what Dr. Daniel Steel calls "The Unclaimed Deposit." He is here at our service and we fail to use him. We are spiritually poor and powerless, not because we must be, but because we are not using our available resources. Here is the river of God which is full of water. We need to open the channels for its richer flow.

The great question is, are we willing to pay the price? We must come to Pentecost by way of the Cross. There is no other way. One reason, indeed the principal reason, why the

Church is so pitifully powerless and fruitless is because her membership in general is self-indulgent instead of self-sacrificing. The Cross must be in the heart and life. As a great thinker has significantly said: "The Cross on Golgotha cannot from sin redeem thee except it be first erected within thee." Much less can the Church bring the world to Christ except she herself experience salvation through the Cross. A self-denying Church, dead to the world, alone can give life to the world. Selfishness and self-indulgence are the curse of the world and the bane of the Church. Pentecost will not come easily to this modern Church. She must go to Pentecost via Calvary.

When this new Pentecost comes in this way upon the Church, there will come to this sordid, sin-ridden, self-absorbed, unholy world, through the quickened and recommissioned Church, a new vision of the Christ and his Cross. The "old rugged Cross" will have "a wondrous attraction." Thus the Cross is the very heart of the Pentecostal message and Pentecost as an experience imparts to the Church the passion that makes the Cross triumphant.

Prayer

O God our Father! With humble contrition and yet with undoubting faith and courage we ask Thee for pardon on account of manifold failures and faults, and especially to forgive us for our slowness of heart to believe all that Thou hast promised and held out to us of possibilities and power. We humbly thank Thee that we live in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, and that we have the privilege of celebrating in a special way the nineteen hundredth anniversary of the first outpouring of thy Holy Spirit. O we devoutly, fervently pray that that great, vitalizing, empowering experience may come to us and all Thy people everywhere. O God, may we individually and unitedly pray: *O Lord, send us a great revival, and let it begin in me, now!* Spirit Divine, descend upon our waiting hearts. Empower Thy Church anew for her immediate task. Quicken all her faculties and agencies. Burn out all base desire, all self-seeking, all indifference. Give us hearts that are warm with fervent zeal and anguish for a deluded and perishing world. Grant that a universal Pentecost may come upon the universal Church in order that now at last the gospel may be

preached to every nation, and every man have a chance to accept Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour. We ask this in His great name, and for His sake. Amen.

Benediction

The God of peace, which brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

THE POWER OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

THE POWER OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

BY ROSS H. STOVER

PASTOR, MESSIAH LUTHERAN "THE FRIENDLY CHURCH," PHILADELPHIA, PA.

"Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me." (Acts 1: 8.)

My prayer is that the entire Church of the Lord Jesus Christ may, during this nineteenth centennial of Pentecost, learn the meaning of our Saviour's promise in the text: "*Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me.*"

I have watched quarrymen blasting rocks. I have marveled at the power of a little stick of dynamite. The Greek word for "power" may be translated "dynamite." What a blast the Church would make in the world if all her members possessed this power! There would be violent shakings, and by its blast many souls would be freed from sin and brought to Christ.

1. *The promise of this power was given to the Apostles.* It was just forty days after our Lord's resurrection that Jesus stood on Mount Olivet surrounded by his little band of disci-

ples. There he ascended from them into heaven. Before his departure he commissioned them, and gave to them startling promises. One of these promises is my text: "Ye shall recive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me."

These few disciples, who had been trained for three years in Christ's University, were now to go out into the world and preach the gospel. Perhaps to them the task seemed impossible of accomplishment. God knew their difficulties would be great, and that sinful men would make their tribulations hard to bear. Something must be done, and that something God had planned and prepared. To the disciples, somewhat stunned by extraordinary events, and with minds filled with wonder at their Master's departure, was given this promise. And, by the way, the finest thing that can be said about them was that they believed God's promises and followed Jesus's instructions: "That they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

2. This promised power was given to the

disciples at Pentecost. It was just ten days after Jesus's promise that they were gathered together in the Upper Room. Suddenly there was a blast like the rushing of a mighty wind. It came down from heaven and filled the house. Tongues like flame distributed themselves, one resting on the head of each. They were impelled by a new power and began to speak in other languages. A great multitude heard the sound and gathered in bewilderment. Peter preached to this multitude with such power that three thousand believed on the Lord Jesus and were baptized.

Many Pentecosts had been observed by the apostles, great festival occasions when the Jews had brought their freewill offerings of first fruits; but never before was there a Pentecost such as this. It now took on a new meaning. The promised Holy Spirit had come upon them. The Christian Church had been born and equipped and was now empowered for service. Christ, as he always does, had kept his promise. He had gone from them into heaven, that by the Holy Spirit he might be near them—yes, nearer to them than breath to their lungs, than blood to their arteries. The Holy Ghost had descended so that he might embody himself in the Church.

Ages before he had brooded over the deep. He had come and gone as Noah's dove. At Pentecost he came to stay.

The apostles were now to become like sailboats with their sails set for the breeze. The spark had ignited the powder. The engine, which was equipped with coal, water, and engineer, had a fire under the boiler. The button, which connected the bulb to the power house, had been pressed, and electricity was flashing through. With eyes agleam, and countenances lighted, and hearts filled with strange emotions, these Christians went forth courageously to witness for Christ.

Tarry a moment! Listen to Christ's promise! Behold Pentecost! There is spiritual power only when the Holy Spirit comes into the believer's life.

3. The disciples at Pentecost were equipped to be God's martyrs. When Jesus said, "*Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you*," he added: "*And ye shall be witnesses unto me.*" The Greek word which is translated "witnesses" may also be translated "martyrs." You see, a martyr is not only a person who dies for a cause; rather he is one who is *willing* to die for a cause.

I am amazed at the apostles after Pentecost.

These men, who were once so ordinary, now have become extraordinary. For them to know that the Holy Spirit was ever present with them, gave them a moral fiber which produced an astounding courage. Do you not wonder at the brilliant power of Peter, once a lowly fisherman? Wherever he went to witness for Jesus, men and women gave their hearts to the Lord.

A friend in Omaha, Nebr., presented me a pencil on which were printed the words: "Coal is our business, not our side line." No longer was there a mixture of the two businesses of fishing and preaching in the lives of these empowered disciples. They were consumed by one task. Trace their lives, and you will find them truly to have been martyrs. Tradition states that St. Matthew was killed by a halberd in Ethiopia; St. John was thrown into a caldron of boiling oil; rescued, he was finally banished to the Isle of Patmos; St. Thomas, while praying among the tombs in India, was killed with darts; St. Andrew was crucified in Scythia on a type of cross which later took the name "St. Andrew's Cross." It is said that for two days he hung there teaching and preaching the gospel; St. Philip, in Asia, was hanged to a pillar; Nathanael met death in

Armenia; James, the Great was slain by the sword in Spain; James the Less was hurled from the pinnacle of the temple; Simon the Canaanite was crucified in Britain; St. Jude was crucified near the Tiber. St. Peter requested that he be crucified with his head downward, because he considered it too great an honor to be crucified as was his Lord. Whether or not these traditions are correct, the apostles lived as martyrs and died as martyrs through the power of the Holy Spirit.

From the time of Pentecost every age has had its powerful witnesses—those who lived for Christ, and those who died for Christ.

"One dared to die. In a swift moment's space
Fell in life's forefront, laughter on his face.
Bronze tells his fame in many a market place.

Another dared to live the long years through,
Felt his slow heart blood ooze like crimson dew
For duty's sake, and smiled, and no one knew."

In Life There Is Power

Jesus said: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth." (John 6: 63.) The electric bulb can be perfectly connected with the wire and still remain dead. It is when that wire comes into contact with the dynamo that it is "quickened." Then light and heat and power flow through.

I greatly admire the evergreen trees, especially in winter, for while all other trees around them seem dead, they are living green. Like Christians, theirs is a peculiar life. You are truly equipped with life to witness only when you have the power of the Holy Spirit.

There is such a difference between confessing Christians. The trials of life usually bring out trueness. When in Columbia, S. C., I enjoyed the notes of a mocking bird, so delighted was I that I continued to listen for mocking birds. Motoring by a beautiful residence, I said to a friend: "Listen; Isn't that the sound of a mocking bird?" He stopped the auto and we listened. He said: "That is a catbird. If you will notice, it makes many of the notes of the mocking bird, but now and then it cries like a cat." It reminded me of some Christians. Many there are who can sing until the time of testing or of sacrificing service, then there is the disloyal cry that shows lack of real Christian fiber. The Holy Spirit alone can give that.

At the World's Fair in Chicago Tiffany had on display what appeared to be a common pebble. When this seemingly common pebble was held in the hand it was transformed into a beautiful gem. This gem was known as

the "sympathetic opal." The warmth of the hand produced the change. Can you not find the same true in the history of Christianity? Paul came into touch with the resurrected Lord and was changed from a murderer to a saint; Luther got in touch with God's Word, and, seeing Jesus as his conquering Saviour, gave to the world the Reformation; Wesley read Luther's Introduction to Romans, and, seeing Jesus the Saviour freely given to all believers, he became God's instrument in converting thousands; Jerry McAuley was a common river thief. The Holy Spirit brought him to Jesus and transformed him into an evangel of love; Sam Hadley was lifted from the gutter to be a great religious leader; Dr. Mary Baer, one of our prominent missionaries to India, tells how the women of India were always referred to as "Its," but when Christ was preached by men guided by the Holy Spirit, they were called "Shes." The Holy Spirit directs us to Jesus and gives the power of life. We need him in the pulpit and we need him in the pew.

Did you ever see an institution of mercy founded by an infidel? Did you ever behold a home for the aged created by an agnostic? Did you ever know of an orphans' asylum

instituted by an atheist? Did you ever read of any such institutions before the time of Jesus Christ? David Gregg, in "Our Best Moods," writes: "Search the Byzantine Chronicles and the pages of Publius Victor; and though the one describes all the public edifices of ancient Constantinople and the other those of ancient Rome, not a word is to be found in either concerning a charitable institution. Search the ancient marbles in the museums of the world, descend and ransack the graves of Herculaneum and Pompeii, question the travelers who have visited the ruins of the cities of Greece and Rome, and in vain will you seek for the report of a single public institution of mercy, built and supported for the alleviation of human want and misery." It is all since Pentecost that men have so built and served in the name of Christ.

Think of this marvelous truth: "Ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." (1 Cor. 3: 16.) That is not just a promise, it is rather a fact for every repentant, obedient believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is marvelous what the Holy Spirit can do for us when he directs our eyes to Jesus. Certainly it is true that in life there is Power. Spiritual Power is the endowment of the Holy Spirit.

A man is equipped rightly to witness for Christ when he is quickened by the Holy Spirit.

In Knowledge There Is Power

Jesus said: "For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say." (Luke 12: 12.) And again, speaking to the apostles, he said: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things." (John 14: 26.) When St. Paul said, "I know whom I have believed," he possessed knowledge given him by the Holy Spirit, and certainly that knowledge was power to him.

It is the new vision that comes from God that accomplishes. Mrs. E. C. Cronk spoke with wisdom when she said: "What we need is not an opportunity, but an oculist." The Divine Oculist gives to us spiritual sight, and we see the fields white with opportunities for service. We are thus equipped for witnessing.

Miss Lottie Martin, who is now a real witness for Christ in India, was for many years just a sort of an inactive Christian. In God's Word, through which the Holy Spirit always works, she was brought into close contact with Jesus Christ, and her whole being was changed. Fully she gave her heart to God and her will was

swayed by his Love. She would now go anywhere or do anything for him. Even her smile and her handshake are different. She is a woman of power. The secret of Miss Martin's being equipped for witnessing is in the fact that through God's Word the Holy Spirit enlightened her soul. Hers became a spirit of prayer and devotion. To know Christ rightly is to love him exceedingly. Such enlightenment is the work of the Holy Spirit. We must have divine knowledge to be equipped to witness.

In Sanctification There Is Power

"Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. 6: 11.) Sin, with its uncleanliness, blights and weakens. The Christian who, by a daily repentance, is undergoing the cleansing of the Holy Spirit is growing stronger. To place on the same platform a dear Christian mother and a boasting infidel is to preach a mighty sermon on the power of the sanctified Christian life.

I read a story of a soldier who, outside his superior officer's quarters, stood holding his prisoner. "Bring him in," said the officer. "He won't come," replied the soldier. "Then

come in yourself," said the officer. "He won't let me," answered the soldier. That is the way sin has mastered many a life. Pray to the Holy Spirit to blast you free. He can cleanse you! He will cleanse you!

A person must see himself a sinner, and in need of God, before he can be cleansed and empowered. The Holy Spirit points us to Jesus and, comparing ourselves with him, we see ourselves miserable sinners.

In innocence is power. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to convict and purge of sin.

In Leadership There Is Power

Jesus said, "When he, the Spirit, is come, he will guide you into all truth." (John 16: 13.) To ascend a dangerous mountain depends greatly upon the guide. To realize that we have a leader who knows the way gives confidence. St. Paul's life was one of the most godly and successful in all Christian history. Churches were founded by him because he was always led and constrained by the Holy Spirit.

In Hope There Is Power

In the Epistle to the Romans we read: "That ye may abound in hope, through the

power of the Holy Ghost." (Rom. 15: 13.) Because of the light atmosphere of the high altitudes of Colorado it is said that one can see seven times as far as in Pennsylvania. By the power of the Holy Spirit a Christian can see far beyond the horizon, farther than the eye can see, even into heaven. Hope, based upon the historical Christ, gives one such a vision.

At Ocean Grove I said to a little boy who was flying a kite, "What do you enjoy most about flying your kite?" He answered, "I like the 'pull' on the string most." Hope is the "pull" that gives power to life. It equips for witnessing.

I have just visited a lady who has been flat on her back in bed for eleven years. Her joints are locked. I said to her, "Will you tell me what it is that keeps you so optimistic?" She immediately replied, "It is the hope of the better home above." What a witness she is for Christ! In hope she secures her strength.

"We want, O Lord, Thy power to know
Before we forth to service go,
Or else we serve in vain.
We trust not human thought or might;
Our souls are helpless for the fight
Until Thy power we gain."

We Need Our Pentecost

"Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me." Too many of us are just "doing the best we can." That will never be very much. People often have just enough religion to make them miserable. Often Christians live as though they are waiting for the ambulance. There is the smoke of the powder of defeat about them. Friends, there is no need to be withered, weak-willed, propped-up, whining followers of the Master.

Just look about you! Is not the outstanding sin of the Church to-day that of neglecting the Holy Spirit? We are often lukewarm, and sometimes cold, because we have not claimed God's promises.

Apollos was an example of one preaching without the power of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 18: 25 we read how he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, but without much effect, because he knew only the baptism of John. Then he met Aquila and Priscilla, who taught him about the Holy Spirit baptism, and he became mighty for the Lord.

A little boy and his mother sat looking at the framed picture of the boy's father, who was a

missionary. The little boy said, "Mother, I wish daddy would come down out of the frame." Is your religion only beautiful, and rather useless, just because you have it handsomely framed and inactive?

A dry sponge must be dipped in the ocean to be filled with water. So, we can be filled with the Spirit of Power if we will stand upon God's promises and follow Christ's instructions. Learn these lessons from the apostles at Pentecost.

Do you recall the story of the church that was burning? The minister, with tears in his eyes, was witnessing the scene. He happened to see an atheist, with whom he was acquainted, standing by his side. "Why," said the minister, "this is the first time I have ever seen you so near my church." "Well," replied the atheist, "this is the first time I have ever seen your church on fire." Yes, indeed, a great part of the Church has lost its passion; we need Pentecost to renew our zeal in bringing men and women to Christ.

Jesus said, "Without me ye can do nothing." The Bible says: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." Only by the power of the Spirit can spiritual and everlasting things be accomplished.

Friends, this power of transformation, this equipment for service is promised to obedient believers. Peter, when speaking to the Council which was trying him, said: "The Holy Ghost, whom God hath given them that obey him." (Acts 5: 32.) We must cease striving against him. It is in obedience that he comes into our lives. In his sermon at Pentecost Peter said to that large audience: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and *ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*" (Acts 2: 38.) We need not wish vaguely. We can have him and his power.

The first Pentecost was nineteen hundred years ago. Ever since that time the Holy Spirit has been in his world. He is willing and ready to abide in you. He is power divine. He alone can "set us on fire" as God's witnesses. You can have no spiritual power without him. Believe! Obey! And he will make his abode within you.

"Silently now I wait for Thee,
Ready, my God, Thy will to see;
Open my eyes, illumine me,
Spirit Divine.

THE FIRE FROM HEAVEN

THE FIRE FROM HEAVEN

BY JAMES I. VANCE

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"And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." (Acts 2: 3.)

THE Christian Church started in a rain of fire from heaven. The hour was called Pentecost. Christendom is preparing to celebrate the nineteenth centennial anniversary of the baptism of fire. How better could it be observed than by a world-wide revival of religion, under whose spell the races shall turn to Christ, and sinners say once more, "Men and brethren, what must we do to be saved?"

What an hour was Pentecost, when in that upper room in Jerusalem nearly two thousand years ago the fire from heaven fell! For forty days one hundred and twenty people had been waiting for God to do something. They had hung their faith on Christ's promise to baptize them with the Holy Ghost and with power from on high. They had tarried there day after day in the expectation of prayer. Doubtless the atmosphere of that room was tense

with the anxiety of hope deferred and with longing wearied by waiting.

Then suddenly something happened: a gleam, a flash of flame, the fire from heaven on every tongue. And now everybody is talking, and talking in other tongues, and every one understands. The tide is on. The kingdom is coming. Soon the one hundred and twenty have become three thousand, and ere long the three thousand three hundred thousand, and a river is running through time that will water the world.

The Christian Church started with the baptism of fire from heaven, and it has been going and growing ever since. There has never been a true revival of religion but began in a Pentecost, in a rain of fire from heaven.

Fire melts and makes over. Sometimes we wonder what becomes of all the old scrap iron in the world, of all the discarded steel bridges and worn-out railroad rails and broken-down machinery. What becomes of it? You see huge heaps piled up in the yards. You see trainloads of it waiting to be hauled off somewhere. What becomes of it? It goes back to the furnace to be fed to the fire and made over. Many a Christian and many a Church needs

to be made over, and only the fire from heaven can work that miracle.

Fire cleanses and purifies. It burns up the dross. If God is to use us, our hearts must be cleansed. Only the pure in heart can see God. A dirty life can never be the dwelling place of the holy God. The fire from heaven is needed for the cleansing process. There are foul growths in the soul that must be burned out.

Fire fuses. It makes two one. It takes more than ordinary fire to fuse man's soul into communion with God. It takes the fire from heaven. "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them."

Primitive

Pentecost is primitive. It is getting back to elemental moods. It is God releasing in the life of the Church a force that is virile and unworn. Man's conquest of nature began the hour he learned to build a fire. The Church's conquest of the world, the flesh, and the devil began with that baptism of fire in the upper room.

"They spake with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." They spake with tongues touched with a live coal from off

the altar, with a fiery eloquence that burns its way into the guilty conscience. That is the only kind of preaching that will wake the dead. Somebody has got to say something that will set the world on fire. O, these icepacks in the pulpit! There are sermons that lack the warmth of even a Lucifer match.

It is not so much the silver tongue as it is heaven's fire on the lip. It is not so much the learned discourse as it is the breath of the Holy Ghost. You read Simon Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost. Was there ever a duller sermon? It is a dry recital of stale historical events with which the audience was already familiar. How could that sermon save anybody? Read Jonathan Edwards's famous sermon on a sinner in the hands of an angry God. You will grow tired before you are half through. What was there in that sermon to make men grab the backs of benches to keep from sliding into hell? It was not the sermon. It was the fire from heaven. It was a breath from the unspent source of spiritual life. It was contact with something elemental.

Formal religion is stamped with the features of death. It goes to seed in a decent and orderly manner. An earthquake is needed if life is to be released. A revival is always

more or less disorderly. In our formal hours we master our religion, but in revival seasons we are mastered by our religion. We get back to the primitive.

Culture becomes sterile. Then God takes us back where the forces are dynamic, and things begin to happen. The face of death is disturbed. Our placid moods are heated red-hot. Life is charged with a sort of holy insolence, a kind of divine audacity. The fire from heaven is on us.

Power

Pentecost means power. This was the promise: "Ye shall have power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Power is the big asset. Anything is possible with a sufficient dynamic. Fire is the secret of power. It is when the steam rises that power is released. It takes the fire from heaven to release omnipotence. And that is what happened in that upper room.

When that kind of power begins to flow through the Church, the dead rise and sinners are saved. Obstacles are overcome. Difficulties are swept out of the way. The strongholds of evil are shaken down. Prison doors are opened and the captives set free.

Then God breaks through our little programs and makes a program of his own for his Church. He makes it bigger and better than we could ever dream. We are not straitened in him, but in ourselves. He can do for us beyond all that we ask or think.

When Isaiah was writing of the golden era of the Church, he said: "There shall be upon every high mountain and upon every high hill rivers and streams of water." He was speaking of a power that functions in such a way that ordinary courses are reversed. The natural order is changed. The plains are sent to the heights, and when that power operates the Church has a new day. A tide is coming in that cannot be resisted. When that kind of a tide comes in, the sea makes a new shore line. Watch a river at flood. See how it sweeps and widens. It refuses to stay in its banks. It makes a new channel for itself. That is what the Church does in times of revival, for Pentecost means power.

Plenty

Pentecost means plenty. Back of it lies the great reservoir of the fullness of God, and the gates swing open for the resources of the Almighty to overflow his Church.

Think of the unharnessed power lying back in nature. It is beyond computation. It is everywhere. It is latent in everything, and it needs but the touch of fire to release it. But nature's reservoir is as nothing compared to the plenty of the infinite which deluges God's people when the fire from heaven falls.

God never wastes anything. And yet he pours out with a prodigality that is limitless.

He is ever saying what the prophet said to the widow: "Bring me yet a vessel." The only thing that can stay the tide of heaven is the lack of a vessel to hold it. God will give us all we can hold. Why should our souls starve themselves to death?

Sometimes a drought withers the fields. The streams dry up. The forests fade. The trees stand leafless in midsummer. It looks as if it might never rain again. Then a cloud no bigger than a man's hand hangs on the horizon, a flash of heaven's lightning, a roll of God's thunder, and the rain is pouring down. Directly the rivers roar in their channels, and the world is green again. God has shown us what he can do.

There are periods of skepticism when religion languishes. Prayer is ridiculed. The Church is deserted. The Bible is neglected.

Wickedness riots. God seems dead. Then once more God thunders and the fire from heaven falls. And such people as write the religious articles for the *Atlantic Monthly* and similar periodicals wonder what has happened. They have no explanation. There is no explanation but Pentecost.

Progress

Pentecost means progress. God is giving the world a new day. If things are ever to be better, there must be a fire. Some things must be burned up. Often we regard the fire as a disaster. Later it turns out to be a blessing. We are always afraid of the fire from heaven. We are afraid of anything new, unusual, unheard-of. We are afraid of a new idea, a new dogma, a new creed. We are afraid of excitement. But that is God's way of giving the world a new day.

Conservatism is a poor God. The reactionary is shocked to death by Pentecost. He will die if you leave him without a precedent. What always has been is the land where his little idols camp. But God is for progress. He wants a bigger and a better day. He is constantly building a bigger and a better world. His rivers widen as they race toward

the sea. His stars brighten as the darkness deepens. The world spreads out as we race through space. There are no blind alleys, no dead walls, no end to anything.

Burn your tape line. Break your pitcher. Throw away the pint cup in which you are trying to dip up a world ocean. Scrap your statistics. Pentecost is on the wire. God believes in progress, and so every now and then he sets the world ablaze with the fire from heaven.

Supernatural

Pentecost is the undying certificate of the reality of the supernatural. Some one says the virgin birth is unthinkable. Another says the Bible is out of date. Another says Genesis is poetry and creation a myth. Another declares that all there is left of religion is the good life. Another clamors for a religion that does not taboo happiness, and moves to repeal the Ten Commandments.

Comes Pentecost, and "the old order changeth, giving place to new." How the skies clear and the mists lift! Soon the sun is back again in a blue heaven. He was there, of course, all the time, only the eye that mistakes a dot for the end of the world could not see.

How the stars come out! There are so many you cannot count them. Who said the stars were dead?

Comes Pentecost, and so the drivel dies. The detractors of the Almighty pack their little kits. The Church forgets to be afraid. Dumb tongues find a voice, and stagnant souls are swept and stirred by the breath of the infinite. Three thousand in a day are added to the one hundred and twenty who thought the upper room was all there was of God. "There appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." O for the fire from heaven!

Prayer

Revive Thy work, O Lord, in the midst of the years. Stir the sluggish pulses of a sleeping Church. Shame us for our selfishness and pride. Cleanse our hearts. Burn out our sins. Set us aflame with a passion for souls. Give us the vision of a marching, conquering Church, and help us to realize the vision. Waken into action the latent possibilities and harness to sacrificial service the powers of the Church Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood.

We tarry in the expectancy of prayer. We

hang our faith on the promises of God. O Lord, tarry not, but come. Shake the world with a new sense of the divine presence, and let men know that Thou art God. Rain down once more the fire from heaven, and give us Pentecost; and the glory shall be Thine throughout all ages, in the Name that is above every name. Amen.

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